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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

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American Jewry and Israel's Economic Crisis *Hal Lehrman*

Hal Lehrman, whose article "Turning Point in Jewish Philanthropy?" (September 1950) has been called the soundest appraisal of the fund-raising problems facing the American Jewish community today, will report the facts behind the new billion-and-a-half-dollar plan to finance Israel, and its implications for Jewish communal life.

The Fortunes of Beckey Wells *Cecil Roth*

In the person of Beckey Wells, colorful inhabitant of the demimonde of 18th-century English journalism and theater, Judaism for a brief moment found one of its less respectable—though not less interesting—proselytes.

Civil Rights, 1950 *Milton R. Konvitz*

A balance sheet on the state of American liberties after a year of mounting tension on the international scene and violent political debate at home.

The Two Worlds of Delmore Schwartz *Heinz Politzer*

Out of the conflict of intellect and experience, of childhood and maturity, of Jewishness and the universal, the poet and story writer Delmore Schwartz has made a body of work that strikes a special note in modern American literature.

On Jewish Humor *Irving Kristol*

Jewish humor at its best, everyone agrees, is very humorous. This is so, Mr. Kristol maintains, because Jewish humor at its best is very serious. An incursion into a field where every man is his own expert.

Scarsdale's Battle of the Books *Robert Shaplen*

A proposal to exclude the books of Howard Fast from the school library brought to wealthy suburban Scarsdale the problem that in one form or another has confronted dozens of American communities in the past few years. A study in community action.

Ahad Ha-am, Cultural Nationalist *Hans Kohn*

Asher Ginzberg, who called himself Ahad Ha-am—"One of the People"—preached a nationalism not of statehood and power but of culture and the spirit. Dr. Kohn suggests that Ahad Ha-am's message, with its emphasis on moral values, is today more meaningful than ever.

The Honekker Song *Hamlen Hunt*

Chanukah brings complexities of "intergroup relations" to the nursery school set. A short story by the author of "In the Beginning Was the Word" (December 1949), just cited in Martha Foley's list of distinguished stories of the year.

COMMENTARY

HAS EUROPE THE WILL TO FIGHT?

Since Korea, the Moral Climate Has Changed

HERBERT LÜTHY

PARIS

THE Communist aggression in Korea has acted as a catalytic agent in Western Europe. Almost overnight one sensed a new climate of moral unity—the indispensable prerequisite for any effective defense against Soviet might. But at the same time Korea brought to the surface a whole series of latent dissensions and misunderstandings within the Western alliance. So this would seem to be the appropriate time to discuss frankly the many unavoidable differences between the European and American reactions to recent political events, differences which, once grasped, might spare many superfluous discordances, recriminations, and polemics.

AT THIS increasingly warm stage in the cold war, Americans, both in the government and out, are asking: Will Western Europe fight for the free world? Simultaneously, Europeans are asking: Will America fight for Europe? These questions intersect at what is probably the most delicate point in the Atlantic Pact. For if Europe has capitulated in advance, American arms sent to Europe may only end up in the service of the Red Army; and if America will not commit itself to the immediate defense of Europe—as distinguished from its eventual liberation—there is little reason for Europeans to make heavy sacrifices for a lost cause. So far, as HERBERT LÜTHY here points out, this problem has been dealt with largely as a matter of morale and public psychology, and answers have been sought more often in the fields of propaganda and "better understanding" than in that of action. Mr. Lüthy suggests that we had better look to some more substantial realities—and his article devotes itself to them. A historian by profession and a journalist by vocation, he writes regularly for the Swiss newspaper *Der Tat*, and for other European periodicals. His article on "France's Homeless Left" appeared in the August COMMENTARY. The present article was translated from the German by Felix Giovanelli.

TODAY, four months after the alarm tocsin of Korea sounded, it is difficult even to recall the aimlessness and heedlessness which marked the Atlantic Conference in London, held last May. The discussions—there was little about them that was binding—then turned chiefly on the question of whether supplementary appropriations for defense could be expected from the individual member states. The official communiqués of the conference reflected a considerable complacency over the status and tempo of Western rearmament and nobody seriously called into question the assumption that the West had before it three or four years of grace for an undisturbed and painless gathering of its military strength. The Korean war swept this assumption away—it had never been based on much more than wishful thinking.

The first effect of the outbreak of the Korean war was a re-appraisal of the original rearmament timetable. Confronted by a challenge the implications of which could not be blinked, the Western powers totted up their two or three full divisions and squadrons. The first reaction to the obviously catastrophic ratio between the military preparedness of Soviet Russia and its satellites on the one hand and that of the United States and its allies on the other was one of panic. "It is perhaps too late to save South Korea," was the opening sentence of *Le Monde*'s first editorial comment after the beginning of hostilities. "Has not the prestige of the United States and of the United Nations been thoughtlessly staked? . . . It is to be feared that the events of the next few days will show that the game has been lost in advance and that American help will arrive too late. . . ."

The resolution with which the United States, cautiously followed by the other members of the United Nations, met the challenge, overcame this moment of discouragement and once again demonstrated the powers of improvisation of American strategy. But the time was past when paper plans, long-range programs, symbolic general staffs were enough to keep everyone happy. The call for dispatch and immediately effective measures now characterized all discussion. It was of course inevitable that the call should be especially directed by America—the strongest power—to the European member states of the Atlantic Pact. It was perhaps also inevitable that this call should at times take on a hysterical ring.

In democratic countries, where life and public opinion are not ordered by the dictates of an all-powerful politburo and where discussion, not barrack-room discipline, is the rule, it is a fact that grim resolutions looking to preparedness cannot be realized without a price paid in the form of alarmism and war psychosis. And in such cases, war psychosis far outruns material rearmament. Such military steps as the building up of divisions, officer training, munitions production, all the monstrously complicated machinery of a modern army, have their "inertia," their own schedules, which can be abridged but not eliminated by massive planning and appropriations. In consequence, there is always a rush to make gestures of decisiveness which will assure the public that the paralyzing moment of weakness has been overcome. The need for such gestures was particularly great this summer. But immediately after they were made, and partly as a result of them, the first discordant notes in the Atlantic Nations' chorus of moral unity were heard.

America did not hear from Europe the note of virile decision that she expected, and made no effort to hide her disappointment. On the other hand, the clarion calls—much magnified for the benefit of the coming American elections—that could be heard from Washington diffused as much terror in Europe as they did encouragement. The glaring discrepancy in attitudes may be expressed by a formula: whereas, for that sector of American opinion which is most vocally represented by radio and press, the war in Korea was quite simply a stage in an accepted "war against Communism," in Europe every discussion began with the premise that "a war must be avoided."

To understand this, it suffices to look at a world map, to measure off not only the distances from the present theater of hostilities, but to mark off the probable boundaries of the theater of a general war. The Red Army is not on the Elbe as is commonly said—the notion of a line on the Elbe is one of the many mystifications which quite inexplicably haunt all international discussions—but on the Hessian-Thuringian frontier halfway between the Elbe and the Rhine; and, militarily speaking, today nothing stands between it and the Atlantic Ocean. "If Russia should decide tomorrow to send the Red Army on a march to Brest, it would march to Brest, and this without the slightest difficulty," Paul Reynaud pointed out last August in the French Chamber. The French Minister of Defense questioned the timeliness of these words but not their truth.

What holds the Red Army back from this little promenade is not the opposition of an effective military force on the Continent, but the danger of a world war, which would not end for Russia with the conquest of Europe, but would begin with it. However, there is no doubt that, under present conditions, the war *would* be ended for a vast portion of Western Europe well before it became a world conflict; and, whatever the hope of a later liberation, it would be ended in a tragically definitive sense. "In the techniques of occupation, the Nazis were mere dilettantes"—such were the words of a Russian field marshal which Reynaud quoted in the above-mentioned speech and to which he added: "After three months of Russian occupation you would never recognize France again."

These are commonplaces, but people slide over their implications when they freely declaim against European and, in particular, French defeatism. Such defeatism does exist. It would be astonishing if it did not. But involved here are also simply the realistic fears of those who have not—at least not yet—the means to protect themselves. Even decisions to build up military strength and fortify positions of defense are embraced without exultation and without loud proclamations of intention, for such steps are made under the eye of an enemy power which for some time to come will be overwhelmingly strong.

So it is that the word "provocation," which has become virtually meaningless to American ears, still retains a very palpable meaning for the West European continent. It is difficult to exaggerate the catastrophic effects upon the allies of the United States of the "preventive war" credo of certain high-placed American politicians, of the open affront made against the Russian delegates at a diplomatic banquet by their American hosts, of the tone of many congressional debates, of warlike gestures centering around Formosa, China, and the atom bomb. Even allowing for the overheated electoral atmosphere of America, there is still nothing reassuring about the thought that the foreign policy of the greatest world power of our time—a policy on which the fate of the free world hangs—is paralyzed for months every two years and for a full year every four years by congressional and presidential elections, that the weightiest international decisions are made the football of partisan rivalry. It should be kept in mind that an understanding of the quite unique institutions and traditions of American life, which provoke—in spite of everything—an admiration for the manner in which American democracy continues to surmount its own limitations and difficulties, is much less diffused in Europe than is an understanding of European institutions and traditions in America.

But the divergence in the respective reactions of America and Europe was shown not only in those gestures and speeches which, owing to the radical differences in political vocabularies, are misunderstood once they cross the Atlantic. Even the announced common resolution to create, within a year or two, strong defense forces on the European continent, soon revealed sharp differences between the American and European approaches to this matter.

Between such an announcement and realization stretches a period dangerous in the extreme, of a nature to invite intervention on the part of that power, i.e. Russia, against whom these preparations are directed. It is plain that this danger must be risked. To shrink before it would mean to throw oneself on the tender mercies of the Soviet Union in an effort not to irritate it. But it is one thing to set rearmament in motion and quite another to sound off with plans which at best take months or years to carry out. The fuss over German rearmament is the most striking example of this haste to make threatening gestures on the basis of future—not actual—strength, a haste that breeds dissension within the West.

That the rearming of Germany or, as it is put, "the integration of Germany into the defense of Europe," is the ultimate logical consequence of the Atlantic Pact, nobody will deny; in fact, that was one of the main arguments advanced against the pact in those countries which only several years ago had been liberated from the German occupation. But the pact has many other prior steps—much closer to home—which are still far from being achieved. One of these is the creation of a European defense organization of which Germany could be a member; so long as such an organization is not in being, the word "integration" will remain humbug or a euphemism for a German mercenary force under the occupation powers—and no one in Germany will hear of such a thing. Put more simply: the most immediate corollary of the Atlantic Pact is the military preparation of the member states themselves; but even this has remained a paper affair at the very time of the debate on a resurrected German army.

A YEAR after the signing of the military assistance pact, armament deliveries to the European signatory states had not even reached 15 per cent of the credits allotted for the year. The surpluses available from American inventories corresponded only in small part with European needs; and not only were opportunities for new contracts limited by America's own requirements, but delivery deadlines were moved back further and further. In the beginning of August, the French and British foreign ministers made it clear that an extension of the period of military service was out of the question so long as no additional weapons and munitions were on hand. When, one month later, both countries anyway announced such an extension, that was more an answer to diplomatic and psychological pressures than an outcome of altered material circumstances. The twenty rebuilt Sherman tanks from the last war (the first American delivery at Cherbourg that was not merely symbolic) were hardly enough to affect the tragic shortage of modern weapons and trained officers in the French army. Actually, the introduction of longer military service is bound to take place much more slowly than has been announced, for it adds neither to military strength nor morale to keep men under the colors who, for lack of arms and officers, must be kept busy with potato-peeling, aimless marching, and drill —as is now only too often the case.

Under these circumstances, the declaration of principle on German rearmament can be interpreted only as either a precipitate gesture of dubious immediate utility or as a decision to give priority to the rearmament of Germany over the rearmament of its Western neighbors—a decision which would blow the foundation of the Atlantic Pact sky-high. It has perhaps not been sufficiently observed that French "refractoriness" is not based on hostility to the intention of including Germany in the Atlantic Pact but rather on the timing of such an announcement of intention. The emotional relations between France and Germany would, to be fully grasped, require a very exact and nuanced study. But this much can be said with some confidence: the psychological presuppositions upon which a genuine Franco-German partnership can be based are maturing with amazing rapidity, more so in the provinces than in Paris, more so among the common people than among intellectuals and politicians, and more so beneath the surface than on it. But it would not be rendering a service to Franco-German amity were Germany to be rigged up overnight, by means of a sensational proclamation and a few symbolic weapons, into something that Communists could pass off as a "German menace." *

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* The British attitude to this question would require an analysis apart. It is a century-old British tradition to play France and Germany off against each other on the European continent. Anachronistic as such a balance-of-power policy may seem today, so deeply rooted a tradition cannot be extirpated overnight. Great Britain did not share the fate of the European continent in the last war and, at bottom, feels as remote as ever from it. In lieu of further explanation, I quote the conclusion of a study which the *Observer* devoted to the question of German rearmament in the issue of September 24: "Indeed, if Germany in five or ten years became a threat again, would not the first effect of this be to re-create a common interest between Russia and the West and restore some of the conditions which in the past have so often made Russia and Britain allies? Might not the revival of a slight common fear of Germany even be the key to better relations between Russia and the West, and to a return of mutual tolerance?" It is quite unthinkable that anybody, anywhere in continental Europe, would be capable of a train of thought of this kind, in which the renewal of old and bloody European conflicts is seen only as furnishing the small chance for a Russo-British understanding.

The only possible way to bring about a real rearmament of Germany would be the restoration of the recently dismantled armament industry in the Ruhr, which lies within immediate reach of the present jumping-off positions of the Red Army—a solution so adventurous that it has been scarcely discussed in public up to now. In any case, the shift from the material and spiritual demilitarization of Germany, just brought to a conclusion this summer, to remilitarization, will be a complex and lengthy process. And it is not very useful to discuss it with heat and exasperation, under the white light of publicity, in such terms as to suggest that it is not a long-range and, at the moment, theoretical problem, but rather something that calls for an immediate *levée en masse,* for which the doors of the recruiting stations should be flung open tomorrow morning.

Above all, German rearmament is a problem calling for a decision the implications of which deserve very exact consideration—and this not only out of regard for the psychological impact on Germany's Western neighbors. What does a German army mean? It means an army for a divided and mutilated land, a land whose citizens could never accept "defense of the Fatherland" to mean defense of an insane line of demarcation cutting across Germany. Germany does not end at the Thuringian forest, not at Potsdamer Platz, and not at the Oder-Neisse line. A German army, which would almost necessarily be recruited mostly from Eastern refugees, would turn out to be a "liberation army," with the reconquest of East Germany as its fixed goal, whether explicit or not—and Germans are inclined, if anything, to be explicit about it.

That this question, and with it the whole unbearable bisection of Europe, will sooner or later have to be settled, in some way now unforeseeable, is not to be denied; its shadow has lain heavily over Europe ever since the idiotic peace of Yalta and Potsdam. But, seen from a European point of view, it would certainly not be advisable to raise it in a hectically melodramatic fashion without having in the least reflected how it is to be solved and without being in the least on guard, politically or diplomatically, against the kind of mere declaration of principle that would have as its one sure outcome the promotion of new support for Russia in all the Eastern states bordering Germany.

But must not a beginning be made somehow? A beginning *has* been made with the recent decision to fit out a West German police corps, which would be the counterpart of the East German "People's Police." As long as the means of the Atlantic powers suffice only for the equipping of such a police corps, it is scarcely useful to raise the specter of a possible future German army. It would be difficult to find a subject less appropriate to present needs than the one that was brought up under the glare of the Waldorf-Astoria chandeliers and in the heat of an election campaign, accompanied by such arguments *ad baculum* as, "We must take soldiers where we can find them," "A bared fist is something the Soviets can understand," and "Now is not the time for hairsplitting." Now is, above all, no time for theatricalities.

But such considerations as those of timeliness, priority, and political tact, much as they figured in the exasperation of American-European relations this summer, do not go to the heart of the matter. It is apparent that public opinion in the United States expected a clearcut answer to the question: does Europe really have the will to defend itself? It is this question which lies tragically at the bottom of the very real misunderstanding between America and Europe, and it is not to be denied that there are good grounds for asking it. It would be an evasion to answer—though it is true—that sometimes the will to resist is furthered by rearmament, and that morale is often primarily a matter of being armed. For America could put it the other way around: what sense does it make to arm peoples who deep down have already capitulated?

The discussion of this question during the summer was burdened by this cloud of doubt. While America awaited an unmistakable demonstration of European resoluteness, France and Germany demanded American reinforcements on the European continent. This demand came as something tactless and inappropriate at a moment when American public opinion was complaining bitterly that for all practical purposes the United States alone was bearing the costs and making the sacrifices in a war decided upon in common. So the recriminations went back and forth. In the American commentaries on the French memorandum the bitter phrase of "conditional will to resist" came to the surface, which was matched in France by another bitter phrase, "sacrificial cannon fodder," for was it not to this that the Anglo-Saxon powers had traditionally destined France while reserving for themselves the privilege of fighting a "de luxe war" on the sea and in the air

Actually, this last phrase, a "de luxe war," is a compendium of the whole criticism directed against the Atlantic defense system, a criticism which the French were at no pains to conceal at the time of the signing of the Atlantic Pact and which will undoubtedly be heard even more loudly from Germany. It would be fatal to confound it without further ado with defeatism. Western European nations, for whom all retreat is cut off in case of war and who will fight it out on their own soil, must always find disquieting the freedom of movement of those allies who are primarily sea and air powers. This is a matter of geography, and geography is not something that can be changed at will. In the Atlantic system, the immediate, the mortal risk is situated on one side of the Atlantic, the economic and military potential on the other, and in the very front line stand the chronic invalids of two world wars: Germany, which has the Red Army not on its frontier but in its midst, and France, which twice in a generation has had to bear the brunt of the attack, bleeding freely from it in the First World War and collapsing utterly in the Second.

For the Anglo-Saxon powers, the old English recipe of winning a war in the last battle still makes sense. But for the continental states of Western Europe, the first battle might well, under present circumstances, be a matter of life and death. The demand for formidable military assistance to Europe, not weeks and months after an outbreak of war but from the very outset, is therefore thoroughly understandable. Criticism which grows from the absence of such plans for immediate and decisive aid is not limited to Communists, neutralists, and defeatists. General de Gaulle's incessant protests against the subordination of French needs to Anglo-American strategic planning, which cold-bloodedly envisages, in case of need, a retreat behind the Pyrenees and the Suez, spring from just this consideration. It should be firmly understood that with the activation of German military potential, similar protests from the German side would ring out even more loudly and insistently; and the very real Franco-German solidarity on this question might well prevail in the end over all ancient mistrust.

THE forthright American intervention in Korea undoubtedly stilled those critics of the Atlantic Pact—they were not in fact very numerous—who cast doubts on the sincerity and effectiveness of American promises of aid. But the progress of the campaign has not given the lie to those critics who declared that "the Atlantic Pact no doubt assures the ultimate punishment of the aggressor, but it cannot hinder him from murdering his victim at will." The first short-term effect of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, and of the consequent fear of a broadening of the war, was to polarize minds in two camps. On the one hand, there was a stiffening of the will to resist at any price. On the other, there was a welling up of defeatism, which in the upper crust—that upper crust which had already demonstrated the quality of its patriotism and courage in 1940—was translated into a flight of capital and a scramble for visas; and which, among the broad masses, was translated into a strongly growing response to the Communist "peace campaign" and a limited but ominous swelling of the membership rolls of the Communist party.

Such was the momentary effect. Now one can make out another, a slower and deeper tendency at work in the opposite direction. It has come into being almost independently of the political and legal aspects of the Korean war: not much in the way of indignation over the North Korean aggression could be worked up, and nothing at all in the way of sympathy for Syngman Rhee's "democracy." Even the military course of the campaign with its reverses and successes had little decisive effect on the psychological transformation to which I refer: this transformation made itself felt before the Seoul landing, which marked the turning point of the war.

What was decisive was that in Korea war was once again taking on its old, familiar, "classical" form, namely, a war waged with rifles, artillery, fighter planes, hand-to-hand combats, infantry assaults in mud and heat and rain, a war which was murderous, grim, and dirty, as wars have always been, but which was being waged on a human scale. It was not that metaphysical push-button war of the future, over poles and across continents, led by a handful of technicians, a war whose image had been made current by a flood of popular literature and propaganda. It can be simply put that the Korean campaign has made the idea of a European defense once again quite thinkable for the "common man."

This may have an absurd ring but it is scarcely an exaggeration: the thought of a possible defense of one's country had become outmoded in many West European nations with old military traditions. That a state like France should be anything other than a passive battlefield in the conflict between East and West had become utterly unbelievable in the last few years. It seemed to enter the reckonings of neither France's political leaders nor the strategists of the Atlantic Pact that France could do more than defend herself internally in the "cold war" (a phrase that has suddenly become outmoded) and maintain law and order. They reasoned that European defense meant the Marshall Plan, economic and social legislation, and, if necessary, the police. In case of military aggression from without there were of course America's atom bombs; there was no need for Europeans who did not have the bomb to concern themselves—they could contribute nothing. The problem of war and peace was one that lay beyond all European responsibility, for one of two things was thought to be true. Either the threat of the Horror Bomb ruled war out, and in that case it was certainly cleverer to divert Europe's war-damaged economy to peaceful production instead of squandering money and labor on out-of-date and useless barracks and cannon. Or, perhaps, the bomb was no hindrance to war, and a war would take place. So then there would begin that "modern war" which had been depicted in a thousand styles: the total apocalypse, the annihilation of all organic life in the battle areas, the loosening of cosmic forces of destruction with no possibility of defense or even of individual self-preservation. In such a world catastrophe, the intervention of soldiers of the old "classic" type would be not only needless but quite unimaginable. For the populations of the European No Man's Land, "it didn't matter what happened."

The American propagandists for the atomic bomb had certainly never imagined that such might turn out to be the result of mass exportation of trashy horror literature about super-bombs and wonder weapons. No one can confidently say whether the Russians were intimidated by it, but at all events it spread among the peoples of Western Europe not a feeling of security but of comatose apathy.

This paralyzing myth of the atom bomb was not an inspired creation of Russian propaganda, but a quite unforeseeable result of American publicity. The Communists in fact sought for a long time to neutralize its shuddersome effects, to belittle the bomb, before it dawned upon them what wonderful propaganda capital could be squeezed from this hobgoblin; whereupon, they sent out their "peace partisans" with Stockholm peace petitions in hand. And it was not only the man on the street who seemed, under the influence of this nightmare, to wave aside the question of national defense by a "what's the use?" Neither the European military authorities nor the Americans participating in plans for European defense had been able in two years of talks, proposals, and plans to get past the holiday-speech stage. The "European General Staff" at Fontainebleau carried on mass maneuvers with hypothetical troops, the United States was pledged to defend the demarcation line with hypothetical troops, and whenever a tangible reality was sought behind all the committees, staffs, and bureaus of the Atlantic Pact, all that could be found boiled down to one single thing: the threat to drop the bomb.

The consequence was that not only American senators, but even a very pacifistically inclined editor of *Le Monde,* an organ strongly tending to neutralism and peace politics, came out several days after the outbreak of the Korean war with a wild outcry, under the characteristic title, "Sodom and Gomorrah": "Drop the Bomb!" (He did not specify where.) Fortunately, it was not dropped. The reality of the Korean war has wiped away the fantasies spun out by amateur strategists about the War of the Future, and has made it possible to view old-fashioned land defense as not only something more than a chimera but as a necessary and possible, if bitter, task which is not the affair of a few technicians but of a whole citizenry.

This is a reversal whose moral and political implications cannot be disregarded: when the feeling of resigned helplessness is overcome, the Fifth Column will have lost its most potent trump card. It means a sweeping change of the moral climate and it is in this new climate that a measure like the prolongation of the period of universal military service has become possible. This measure is a clear and unmistakable sign to every young Frenchman or Belgian that he counts for something and that the soldier has ceased to be a hopelessly anachronistic comic figure in the humorous weeklies of the atomic era.

The furious and helpless reaction manifested by the Communist party to the extension of military service best shows how ripe the time was for the psychological shock: for the first time Communist propaganda finds itself on the defensive. It has been unable to profit by the fact that, as was to be expected, everyone raised a grumble about the extension. The French soldier has always grumbled but this has not kept him from fighting well when not sent out, as in 1940, with old breech-loaders against tanks and dive bombers. The Stockholm appeal, which was plastered this spring and summer over all the billboards of France, has, along with the big talk about wonder weapons, receded into a remote past; and a deathlike silence has settled around the Communists' general order against the production, loading, and transport of war matériel, an order which was at the center of their agitation for several months and led to incidents in all France. The Communist strategy was possible only so long as any thought of military defense of the country appeared as a bad joke in the eyes of the public. That time is over and done with.

To be sure, there are darker aspects of the picture. It is very doubtful that the regimes—French, Italian, German—of continental Europe have the capacity to equalize the burdens of rearmament by a minimum of social justice or to even avert a general fall in the standard of living and, concomitantly, a shameful enrichment of the parasitic layers of society. In the exposed and absurd situation in which the continental rump of Western Europe finds itself, fertile ground will long be available for the Communist exploitation of fear.

But, for a just estimate of the bearing of the new development, it is necessary to measure from what zero point it started. No one who, with open eyes and ears, goes through France and compares the present reactions of Frenchmen with the reactions of these selfsame Frenchmen several months back, can fail to see that a change is in progress and that it does not end at the limits of hitherto Communist zones of influence.

There is, of course, no sign of what could be called enthusiasm. It is an arduous process to have to accustom oneself all over again to the idea that preparation for war is still in the realm of possibility and cannot be shrugged off by a "what's the use?"

Nevertheless, the concept of national defense is bound to remain somewhat infected by a residue of skepticism. It has been suggested, in an attempt to overcome this, that "national defense" be replaced by the "defense of Europe" as an inspiring slogan. True, "Europe" at the present moment is still a mere geographical conception, when it is not the usurped label of powerless and helpless ministerial and parliamentary conferences, and it is no doubt simpler and easier to put on a war footing national armies that five years ago were waging war against each other and, out of an urge to avoid a troublesome waste of time, by-pass the tedious political and institutional detours leading up to the creation of a European Union, which in essence would be a Franco-German union. But it would be short-sighted and fatal to forget the foundation for the sake of rapidly constructing a façade. And the foundation *is* a European Union.

However, the idea of European Union is not a simple one, and some of its implications are only beginning to be drawn. Schuman's stubborn opposition to proclaiming Germany's remilitarization before even a beginning had been made in his work of Franco-German understanding sprang in great measure from a need to protect the whole work of Franco-German reconciliation which had been carried out in the face of tremendous political and psychological opposition. It also sprang in part from apprehension as to the consequences: with the entry of Germany into the Western alliance, the latter would inevitably inherit the demand of German irridentists for the reunification of Germany.

This problem, which is keenly felt throughout the breadth of Germany, has just come to the surface of political consciousness this autumn. And here there has begun a new psychological process, which it would be premature to speak about: if the positive watchword around which Western Europe can rally is still wanting, it is ultimately because a mere defense of Western Europe is in the long run absurd and impossible, just as a mere defense of the Korean Republic was: nobody is eager to fight and to die for a 38th parallel. A defense which is no more than defensive is itself a capitulation. The real alternative lies between *the spirit of the offensive* and defeatism.

At present a shaky interregnum prevails; the thought of a necessary, though in form and extent not yet foreseeable, reclamation of Europe for the West is just now beginning to dawn.

CHRISTMAS–CHANUKAH

December Is the Cruelest Month

GRACE GOLDIN

MY FRIEND Reuben Saberski used to say, "There are certain things Jews mustn't do, just because they're Jews. Let them break religious laws—let them not observe. I suppose it's their business. But they can't sit at a Jewish service with their heads bare. That's not a breach of law—it's cheap. Why do they pray that way? Because the Christians pray that way. It's one of the things Jews mustn't do."

Rabbi Saberski possessed in overpowering measure the sense of what his forefathers used to call *derech eretz*—that is, forthright conduct. Like Lewis Carroll's word "wabe," Saberski's *derech eretz* took in a lot of territory: it went a long way before and behind right conduct, and a long way beyond it on either side. Before he finished he'd incorporated in *derech eretz* a man's work and his play, his thinking and artistry and good taste, even quite a few of his bodily functions.

Yet this accommodating term would exclude our Chanukah last year. It was simply not a shining example of *derech eretz,* as Rabbi Saberski would be the first to tell us. Not that we ignored the holiday, or gave way resignedly and had us a Christmas tree. Our fault was more modern, subtler: we overspent the week. We put Chanukah into italics, where it doesn't belong.

THE founding fathers of our congregation landed on this prairie thirty-five years ago. Their children—those who remained in town—married among themselves; now everybody is related to everybody else. The children's children study Yiddish in *cheder,* and on the Chanukah program they recite it for their grandparents: old-world laments, Zionist naiveties. There are in town half a dozen well-read sets of Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, Mendele; but years and years have come between the old folks and their native tongue: think, when they hear it issuing from their grandchildren! One child lights candles, another serves cakes. Chanukah money rains down for them: quarters, half dollars, silver cartwheels. Immediately afterward the Jewish National Fund box is brought round, to encourage saintliness in the saintly, or saintliness with reservations. And the oblong, low, white-ceilinged *shul* grows warm; this meeting, like all others, closes with the singing of "Hatikvah" (old style). Everybody stands. The grandmothers, excited, weep in Yiddish; what other language can express the heart?

In us of the younger generation there is neither Peretz nor Sholom Aleichem, Siddur nor Midrash; yet do you think we have no problems? We have a very great problem: we won't celebrate Christmas, and don't quite know how to celebrate Chanukah. In our town Chanukah is no longer a Jewish holiday—it's a major competitive winter sport.

Whether it falls early or late in December, we start making preparations a week before

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IN THESE days of strong group self-consciousness and self-assertion existing side by side with an equally strong emphasis on "intergroup relations," perhaps no Jewish parent of young children is entirely at his ease over the question of "what to do about Christmas." Should the Jewish child be encouraged to participate in the holiday celebration? Should he be allowed the Christmas tree he covets? Nor is this merely a problem that engages Jews on a personal level: more than one Jewish community has found itself having to decide whether to support or to deflate the organized effort of a minority militantly demanding that Christmas carols, for example, not be sung in the public schools. GRACE GOLDIN, who here describes her own difficulties with this problem, was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, studied at Barnard and Wellesley colleges, and now lives in Iowa City, Iowa. (Our next issue will include a fictional view of the reverse of this particular medal: "The Honekker Song," by Hamlen Hunt; scene: Cambridge, Massachusetts.)

Thanksgiving, when Christmas carols are put into rehearsal in the public schools. Christmas is with us the year round anyway, subterraneously, as reminiscence, anticipation, or point of reference, and as the climax of a majority of the books our children read. With the first authorized carols, a week before Thanksgiving, Christmas bursts into the open like an oil gusher.

But then, providentially, we Jews have Chanukah—also a gift-giving occasion. (What *would* we have done with Passover at this season?) If Chanukah comes earlier than Christmas, it's an inoculation; if later, an antidote; either way, we in our town violently amplify it, so great has become our need. The character of the holiday has been transfigured by an accident of timing: what used to be a festival of freedom becomes a festival of refuge. We put off red-and-green to put on blue-and-white—that's about the size of it.

This past year our children practiced Chanukah hymns, played Chanukah records, of which there are more on the market every year, dressed up for the Hadassah program as a candle, a *dredel*, a *latke*. They mounted cardboard Jews and Syrians in Maccabean crèches, or pasted together paper chains of cream-colored menorahs, orange stars of David, pink *dredels*, purple elephants. Why elephants, for God's sake? Well, the Syrian army, when it attacked the Maccabees, rode elephants, so Jewish children celebrate with elephants on Chanukah. And they eat cheese dishes because of Judith and Holofernes. Judith stuffed cheese in her wallet before she sallied forth to chop off Holofernes' head; we honor Judith on Chanukah because she was a brave woman, and we honor brave women because somewhere along the line the story of Hannah and her seven sons got attached to the book of Maccabees; therefore: we eat cheese on Chanukah.

Chanukah begins, perhaps, on the day a Jewish child may remark, "There are two times when I just hate school—Christmas and Easter. And I hate Christmas most." Let me confess that I have felt relieved when one or the other of my own children has caught a good cold at this season that hung on as long as possible. The perfect solution would be for both Robin and David to take sick the week before Thanksgiving and stay sick till the twenty-second of December, but who can be so lucky?

Sammy Glick and my daughter Robin were the two Jews in her class. In the whole school there were only six, counting Arnold Posner, whose mother reads to him every December from a book called *Winter Fire Festivals* that deals with Christmases among Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Jews, clear through Greeks, Romans, and Norse, up to our own day. Arnold has no problems yet. The Glicks, on the other hand, do not permit their Sammy any Christmas; so Sammy pranced about school holding his nose and snorting, "Christmas is a stinky holiday!" Or, not having read the Bible, he engaged in controversy with classmates who had also not read the Bible: "*My* Testament's better than *your* Testament!"

Robin long ago discovered that there are children who don't like Jews, "because their mothers or grandmothers or somebody don't like Jews." But last year she was enchanted that there were only two of her and twenty-seven of the others. She was singular; she was "great." They asked her to trim the huge Christmas tree at the front entrance, since she'd never trimmed a tree and her teachers felt sorry for her. Afterwards she was commissioned to write up a piece about Chanukah, which she delivered all over the place. "I don't mind being Jewish," she said much later, "because it usually ends up that when holidays come round I'm the most important. Like in Chanukah, I made speeches to three grades—fourth, fifth, third, and the visitors." She was a one-man Springfield plan. "I don't mind not having Christmas, Mama!" she called from bed one night—the biggest concession you can hope for from a ten-year-old.

LAST Christmas was David's first—he entered kindergarten. Up till then he was relatively untouched. He was the only four-year-old in town who referred to Santa Claus as "she," because it wore skirts. Nice ladies would pat his curls and purr, "Well, what's Santa going to bring you this year?" I didn't know what to teach my son to say. To reply as I did when I was a child, with lofty emphasis, "I do not celebrate Christmas. I have Chanukah. We are Jews"—will meet with a degree of understanding in large cities, but not in your small town. Before you know it, you are delivering a five-minute history of the Jews, or an interfaith sermon, on the steps of the central post office: an invaluable opportunity, had either David or I been born with Robin's love for oratory. David drew his own conclusions, and responded regularly, "Santa Claus isn't *real!*" "Well!" the nice ladies would say. "Aren't you *little* to know so much!" And I would grab David's hand and get away fast, my son protesting, "I was right, wasn't I? Santa Claus *isn't* real, is he?"

Or take what happened in New York City to little Avis Ostow. A friendly Irishwoman sat down next to her in the bus. "What's Santa Claus going to bring you?" Unexpected silence. "What's *Santa* going to bring you?" Blank. "At least you're going to have a tree, aren't you?"

Avis's face lit up. "A tree? I have plenty of trees! I have lots and *lots* of trees!"

The woman blinked. "Lots of trees? In your living room?"

"Who keeps trees in the living room? In Palestine!"

Three months of kindergarten, and David could pass as an authority on Santa Claus. When people asked him questions after that, he kept his mouth shut. But to his best friend and neighbor, Michael, he expounded Chanukah in fullest detail: told about Judah Maccabee and the elephants; about the eight gifts, one for each night, and how this year Robin was going to receive a Junior Encyclopedia wrapped in eight separate blue-and-white packages. He sang the *latkes* and *blintzes* with sour cream, and—at the top of his lungs—his garbled version of *Moaz Tsur* ("I didn't remember it very well," he told me later, "but that's all right, Michael doesn't understand Hebrew"). At the close of this performance Michael's comment was: "I'd rather have Christmas." "You're just used to it," David said. "You'd like Chanukah too if you knew what it was."

MICHAEL and the gang approached me some days later. "When's David going to get his tree?"

"David isn't going to have a tree."

"No tree—?"

"David doesn't celebrate Christmas."

"Not *at all?*"

"David has a holiday of his own, called Chanukah," I added hastily, and for ten minutes gave Michael, David, and three other little boys a course in Jewish customs and ceremonies, with some sidelights on Maccabean history. At one point I found myself quoting Robin's speech. What good the talk did David is one thing—maybe it served as a refresher—the other children dismissed me completely, they were too busy digesting the fact that David wouldn't have any Christmas. What would he *do?*

"Now all the kids want to know about Chanukah," my son reported cheerfully next day. "I think I should have a Bible with me when I go to see them."

But don't imagine Christmas left no dent on David. It left plenty of dent. He learned every carol on the program, providing variations of his own. At "Silent Night" I shivered, recalling my own dim murmur, "Please, may I just hum? You know I'm Jewish. . . ." David was deterred by no such scruples; having unearthed my allergy to Christmas carols he sang them to punish me, whenever he had cause to be displeased with me. I do feel towards all carols the way a very pious Catholic I know feels about one, "Little Lord Jesus," Luther's cradle song: "If only *Luther* hadn't written that hymn," she sighs. "It's so pretty I can't get it out of my head, but then I feel so guilty humming it!"

I sent posthaste for a batch of Chanukah records. At the end of two weeks Robin and David planted themselves before me in the kitchen and rendered six whole sides, comments and all, in the very accent of their announcer:

Shaloym, dear children, shaloym, a happy
Chanukaw!
Does everybody have a seat? If not, sit on the
flaw!

"Happy Chanukaw" was our password for weeks. And carols still sounded through the house. In fact, David did not stop caroling till Easter time, when he gradually mislaid the words. Michael expressed disgust with such enthusiasm as early as the morning of December 26, but to David satiety never came, just as Christmas never came; his stocking never bulged, his tree never flowered. He received Chanukah gifts one a night, eight nights, as advertised; but it was not for this end he had been prepared in school. So David, all alone, heralded the approach of Christmas Day till spring.

"MIGHT I come over some time to see your Feast of Lights?" inquired our neighbor Mrs. Ewing. "I've heard so much about it from your children." Sure, we told her, come tomorrow.

We had met Mrs. Ewing suddenly, the first spring we moved into our house. David rode down her tulip bed in his scooter and Mrs. Ewing popped her head out of the window shouting, "You go back to Jerusalem, you!" David was startled. "What did she mean, Mama? I've never been *in* Jerusalem!" Anyway, Mrs. Ewing came to be quite friendly with us.

"So this is Chanukah," she beamed, peering through our orchard of medallions, plaques, and paper chains. "Not so different from Christmas after all, is it?"

"Frankly," I replied, "I never saw a Jewish home so bedecked in all my life. But we have to put up a stiff competition with Christmas, and the kids go for this stuff."

"I never will understand," Mrs. Ewing said earnestly, "why you don't just let them ***have*** Christmas and be done with it. Doesn't it make them feel awful to be left out?"

So the time had come again for my Chanukah sermon. To the naked eye it *does* seem that simple conformity would make things easier for us all, involving nothing more lethal than stockings, a fireplace, a tree, some red-and-green wrappings, and Santa Claus.

Jews, I said, sooner or later have to break the news to their children as to what kind of world this is, and the sooner the better. Christmas—or not having Christmas—is as good a place as any to begin. They can anticipate Christmas, they can see it coming. A little further on, one never knows whence the snake may strike: from *The Merchant of Venice,* maybe, or the ballad of poor little Hugh of Lincoln mutilated by Jews; no teacher on earth is going to charm the poison from these, or render quite benign a book like *Ivanhoe.* But in their way these classics come in handy: they condition our children for the future—for the series of small slaps they will some day suffer from Henry Adams' *Education,* say, one book among many; or from some professor, or some classmate; or from the world.

When I was in the fourth grade, boys in my room already called me "Christ-killer." One day the superintendent of public schools —a being like to God—entered our class suddenly and asked were there any Jews present? I raised my hand. He had me stand up, and delivered over me a eulogy of the Jewish people; told how ancient was my lineage, how brilliant my accomplishments throughout all ages. Then he shook my hand and said he was proud to know me. I wanted to die. After that, the boys still called me "Christ-killer."

Rabbi Saberski once remarked, "Who says a Jew shouldn't suffer?" But we have to prepare our children. It's never easy to be a Jew: the sooner they learn this, the better.

Mrs. Ewing sighed. "You know," she said, "sometimes we aren't all as neighborly as we might be. But if we ever are, it's at this season. What a pity you can't join us!"

I thought so too. It is a pity. But remember Crusades in Germany, Inquisition in Spain, Russian pogroms. O Mrs. Ewing, my people is burning at the stake, and you want me to sing Christmas carols?

IT WAS up to me to give my children a sense of history. We read together about Judah Maccabee, who "fought with gladness the battle of Israel."

"It is an easy thing," he cried, "for many to be shut up in the hands of a few, and there is no difference in the sight of Heaven to save by many or by few, for victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of a host, but strength is from Heaven. They come unto us in fullness of insolence of lawlessness, to destroy us and our wives and our children, for to spoil us; but we fight for our lives and our laws. And He Himself will discomfit them before our face; but as for you, be ye not afraid of them."

"I'm not scared," David interrupted. "I know it's going to work out all right. We wouldn't have Chanukah if it didn't."

Those two children, brought up on American frontier history, take the wonderful victories of Judah Maccabee and the miraculous victories of modern Israel quite in their stride. They know George Washington: Washington always crossed his Delaware. Pioneers tame wildernesses, striplings slay giants, the young prince wins his lady and his inheritance. Does one discourage this form of romance? It's hard to know what line to take.

"Do you know what the wicked Syrians did?"

"No, what?"

What does the book say? "Then they took the babes that had been circumcised, and bound them about the necks of their mothers, and hurled both from the city walls. . . ." I looked at the quick faces of my children and hadn't the heart—though I wonder, really, whether they would have been much disturbed. I am convinced David likes Bible stories because of their violence—red-hot furnaces, crashing walls, patricide, general mayhem. Sodom and Gomorrah would be just his speed.

". . . They took the Temple," I improvised. "That's our big *shul* in Jerusalem, David, and they made it all dirty. . . ."

"I knew it," stated Robin.

"How did they?" David wanted to know.

"They stamped in it with their muddy galoshes, they tore up all the prayer books, they threw the Torahs around, and they brought *pigs* in there. . . ."

"I wouldn't want to eat a pig, would you, Mama?" my daughter mused. "Sally Warner says she eats bacon every morning for breakfast. How can she *stand* it?"

When Robin talks about crumbs of bread on Passover you fancy you can see them squirm like maggots in a garbage pail. As for David, "pork" is a swearword with him.

From my description, my children never learned what the brutality was that Judah Maccabee rose up in protest against. But they did not remain quite innocent. This not having Christmas, when all the world has Christmas, was itself a brutality, one just fit to their size understanding. Let it only strengthen them to lie immortal in the arms of fire!

In America, now, this is the worst Judaism can do to a young child. No Christmas. After that, everything Judaism can do *for* him is sheer profit.

THE time came round for David to take part in his Christmas program at school. When I suggested he quietly not show up, he didn't see the thing my way at all. "Mama, I haff to go, I haff to, I'm a leader!" What's a leader? He wouldn't say, but he wouldn't get sick, and he went around the house for a month learning his part: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went forf a *de*cree from Caesar Au-gustus that all the world should be taxed, and all *went* to be taxed, every one to his own city."

"Typically Jewish situation," my husband commented; but it made me uncomfortable that my son should memorize the wrong Testament.

"And it was so, that Mary brought forf her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no *room* for them at the inn."

On the evening of December 23, our family attended school in a body.

David was giddy with enthusiasm. He left us like a shot to get into his costume—which proved to be a choir boy's white robe and black cassock; I never saw David look so saintly when he was not actually asleep. His daddy took one look at him and was convulsed. Every time David's upraised eyes came into view my husband doubled up again, while other proud mothers and fathers turned back to grin at him sympathetically.

When things—that is, when David's daddy—quieted down a bit, the program began. The kindergarten chanted, "And it came to pass in those days," as with a single voice—in fact, with a single voice. David's. Now I saw what he meant by being a leader. His classmates stopped reciting and stared. Not for nothing had he practiced at the top of his voice: he could be heard to the very rear of the gymnasium: "There went forf a *de*cree. . . ."

"Permit me to congratulate you on your son's knowledge of the New Testament," Michael's mother whispered, twinkling.

That pageant hasn't changed a bit since I hummed in the chorus as a sixth-grader. Mary still wore blue, and the Three Wise Men wore their mothers' kimonos, with scarves wound Turk-fashion about the head and one end dangling down behind. The shepherds still carried Bo-Peep crooks; throughout the performance, one little shepherd kept trying hard to hang his crook over the basketball basket. The scenery—Heaven help us: black cheesecloth night, one star, and an Elizabethan mosque in silhouette. It never was on land or sea; but no matter, this is how the Christmas pageant always looks.

Michael's mother bent across to me again. "What a pity," she murmured, "your people and my people have to fight in the Holy Land at this season!"

Whose Holy Land? I was not going to say to Michael's mother, "*My* Holy Land is better than *your* Holy Land"—theories differ; besides, neither of us has been to it. Her Holy Land is not of this world; the very stables smell of myrrh. My Holy Land is a place so strangely familiar, I can scarcely express the peculiarity of this relationship. I feel toward it as I feel toward Hebrew. They taught me the Hebrew alphabet before I went to school, and the shape of Hebrew letters is like home to me; but I never learned the language after all, and can translate only simple prayers. To see familiar shapes in odd connotations and with unknown meanings—that is my Holy Land.

My mind runs much upon it, on Shabbos when I am worn out trying to lean against the tide, or on Christmas when I want just once to let the Christmas calliope sound off five thousand miles away from me. I want to see the country with my own eyes. To judge it from reports and photographs is like trying to get a notion of Stillwater Falls while standing still in the main street, with one eye closed so there will be no sense of depth, with the other eye color-blind so there will be no sense of color, with the nose stopped and one's whole body muffled in a blanket. What do I expect of my Holy Land? Too much, perhaps; this is my form of romance, thinking up meanings for Israel. But a historical idea that bursts out so dramatically, in so exceptional a form, cannot let me down, however different it may prove to be from what I anticipated.

DAVID'S pageant wasn't particularly long, pretentious, or out of the ordinary. Mary in blue, never moving, stared down into a patch of gold-lighted straw at her feet. I turned against her; yes, against that helpless little son of hers with no better place to lay his sweet head. Every touch is aimed at my son's softest nature! David's voice grows tender talking of the infant Jesus, which he doesn't do very often because he knows I don't like it—why? How can one build up his resistance to a baby in whom are said to reside the combined graces of infancy?

With no break, with scarcely the sense of incongruity, Mary gave way to Santa Claus, a big booming red Santa, David's first. You could hear his shout of welcome above the others. Robin sat next to me and bit her nails. In the carnival of jingle-bells and five-cent candy bars she was as out of place as the Wandering Jew in David's map of Fairyland, a bent old character in brown caftan and skullcap who wanders persistently from the House That Jack Built towards Mary and Her Little Lamb. Michael's mother shouted across to me, "What a shame to spoil the mood of the pageant with this ruckus!"

"The kids like it," I shouted back.

"What I mean is," she explained, moving closer, "they can have Santa Claus any old time, but we'll never instill a sense of reverence in them, ending on a note like this! Something ought to be done about it."

Filing out, I ran into Arnold Posner's mother. She seized my arm gratefully and steered me a little to one side. "What did you think of the pageant?" she inquired, and continued immediately, "*I* thought it was a little thick. All those carols! This is our second year, and they haven't changed a word of it since last time."

"They haven't changed a word," I agreed, "since I was seven."

"Don't you think it's about time we *did* something?"

"What?"

Arnold caught up and went galloping round us in triangles. "Mama," he yelled, "Mama, did you buy my tree yet, Mama?"

"Arnold adores Christmas," sighed Mrs. Posner. "We feel it's a genuine folk festival. Look at the Santa Claus now, that was lovely. Everybody can take part in it. In this country Christmas has become the universal holiday, if our school board would only take cognizance of the fact."

"You know it and I know it, but does the dog know it?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Just a saying in our family," I explained. "My uncle Harry Wardell used to play bit parts in the movies. One day they wanted him to run across a lawn in front of the cameras, with a fierce old police dog after him. 'Don't worry,' they reassured him, 'the dog won't bite.' 'You know it and I know it,' he said, 'but does the dog know it?' "

"Don't be a fatalist!"

"Sorry."

"I for one," pursued Mrs. Posner, "don't want to have to live through this pageant again every year. I'm fed up. We ought to take action, that's what we ought to do. Is this a public school or isn't it?"

"What have you in mind?"

"Maybe some of the other mothers are as sick of the pageant as we are. Some of them must have been sitting through it over and over for fifteen years. Do you think we'd do any good by bringing it up at the PTA?"

"It's their world," I said.

But it's always been their world. It was their world back in December of the year 167 BCE when—to quote Bickerman's superb little book on the Maccabees—"by order of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of Syria and so ruler of the Jews, the Temple on Zion was desecrated and given over to the uses of idolatry." This did not come to pass wholly without the aid of the Jews themselves; in fact, without a certain type of Jew it might not have taken place at all. I refer to the Hellenizers, who took over Greek culture lock, stock, and barrel, with even less compunction than Mrs. Posner felt about the Christmas program. But though his aim was to extirpate Judaism, your Hellenizer was—and is—a definitely Jewish type.

How Jewish types recur in history!—many start as far back as the first twenty chapters of Genesis, and all without exception were established well before the opening of the Christian Era. History has evidently seen no good reason to alter Jews by a thread's breadth since; on our perpetual merry-go-round, the same black horses reappear I don't know how often, the same bay charger, the same striped zebra. This makes it hard to speak of a development in Jewish history. In one sense it doesn't develop at all, it stretches so impossibly long over time. Every Jewish congregation repeats and repeats: regular human fixtures chiming, echoing, sustaining, and augmenting one another across countries and centuries.

Back in the 2nd century BCE we took unto ourselves, for better or for worse, one aboriginal Hellenizer. Since then he faithfully revisits the watches of our night whenever and wherever we have dwelt amid a majority of non-Jews: that is, everywhere and always. In pre-Maccabean Jerusalem he built altars to the Greek gods before anybody ordered him to, offering up sacrifice in front of the doorposts of his house and before his gates—where people couldn't keep from seeing him. Nowadays he puts a Christmas tree in his picture window and scatters Christmas cards all over the mantlepiece. I once knew a first-rate Hellenizer—Mr. Abraham Bergmann, of Stillwater Falls.

Mr. Bergmann was president of Temple Brotherly Love; indeed, his father founded that congregation. Abraham Bergmann was an old, old American. I once asked him, "How does a Jew happen to get born in Stillwater Falls of all places eighty years ago?" "My dear," he replied, "the process is the same here as elsewhere."

When the temple's rabbi tried to end Sunday services with *Adon Olam* (in the original), Mr. Bergmann registered disapproval. "It sounds so *Oriental*, Rabbi!" he protested. "I can't get used to it!"–and suggested "God Bless America" as a substitute. That rabbi knew what was in back of Mr. Bergmann's mind: the temple's monthly broadcast and his Christian friends. Mrs. Emma Bergmann was in the habit of opening council meetings with the Lord's Prayer as a *motzie*. She was surprised to be informed that the Lord of the prayer was not *her* Lord, but she went on using it. Just about that time the Stern Gang was beginning to be active and Emma, I recall, was mightily annoyed. Her Christian friends kept asking, "What's this your people are doing in Palestine?" "Rabbi," she complained, "I've lived in this community forty years, and never have I heard so much about being Jewish as in this past month! Why don't those Jews in Palestine behave, and stay off the front page?" I wonder what Emma Bergmann has been saying since.

The only scrap of Hebrew Mr. Bergmann sanctioned was, of course, the *Shema*. "Wouldn't be without it," he'd say. "It *does* something to me, Rabbi!" I used to think, how many generations of Jews have died with the words of the *Shema* on their lips–in the original–to assure that Abraham Bergmann of Stillwater Falls need not go without his weekly snatch of Hebrew!

MR. BERGMANN was a man of principle. Believing that a good Jew ought to attend his church on Sunday, he never missed a service. But he worried a good deal. This town in which he had been born some eighty years ago was filling up with newer, Russian-Polish elements, young folk ignorant of the first tenets of Reform. Abraham Bergmann wanted to leave the temple intact to his two sons, just as his father had left it to him; if he were to do something constructive about this, he hadn't much time. So he drew up a manifesto, had it mimeographed, and circulated copies among members of the congregation who saw eye to eye with him.

"We stand," this document read in part, "for the continuation of Judaism as a religion, not as a national or racial group. We have no nation except the United States, and no nationality except American. We maintain that Jews are not a secular group and we deprecate any attempt to consider them as such." When Egypt invaded Israel, at the height of the war, I was reminded forcibly of the Bergmann manifesto: two Jewish brothers who happened then to be Egypt's delegates to the English Parliament thus cabled the Grand Rabbi of Egypt: "We challenge the possibility that Jewry is at the same time a religion and a nation. Please note that our nationality is Egyptian, our religion Judaism, and our fatherland Egypt."

Mr. Bergmann drew from his premises the routine, or Houston, conclusions: that *kashrut* was unnecessary, Hebrew no longer understandable, and "traditional laws and customs not in consonance with contemporary standards or needs" no longer obligatory. He therefore resolved that "to strengthen and preserve these basic principles, each rabbi, officer, and trustee, prior to assuming office, should be required to express his adherence to such principles."

A copy of this confession of faith was delivered to the rabbi, signed with twenty names. Hellenizers! The rabbi got word at once to Mr. Bergmann that he intended to preach the very next Sunday against the offensive document, and against his president, come what might, by name. Mr. Bergmann attended temple that Sunday as usual. He sat in his regular pew, third row right; behind him, the house massed for the kill. The sermon was a scorcher. When services ended Mr. Bergmann did not come forward, as was his courtly wont, to reiterate, "Rabbi, we are truly blessed in this community!" But he showed no unseemly haste about going home.

His rabbi stared with admiration after the stiff-necked old man.

You don't always get your Hellenizer in so palatable a guise. Consider the aboriginal of the species—Menelaus, high priest of the new persuasion, the best reason Antiochus was able to get as far as he did. Menelaus went to an extreme that would have horrified Abraham Bergmann. Menelaus sold holy vessels from the Temple to pay Antiochus for appointing him high priest; admitted the king's gold statue to the Sanctuary; agreed to the sacrifice of pigs on Temple altars morning, noon, and night. Why not? Everybody, literally everybody, worshiped in the Greek manner! "The King wrote unto his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and everyone should give up his religious usages." Only we, charged Menelaus, with our eccentric principles, elect to stand outside the march of civilization! So faithfully he saw to it that the Temple worship was brought out into open sunshine, forth from the sacred dusk chamber. Retaining the imageless God, who sorted well with Greek philosophy, Menelaus assigned him to his measured place in a pantheon of all the gods of all the peoples that Syria had overcome.

At the king's orders, troops built Greek altars throughout Palestine, and over each presided some Greek god—Zeus Olympius, perhaps—who bore the most striking likeness to Antiochus. Most Jews went out of their way to avoid these images. They didn't rebel, exactly, they just tried to keep from coming to the point. But the king's troops would not leave it at that. They called compulsory prayer meetings in town after town, sacrificed a pig, and compelled Jews to partake with them of its flesh. So Popes in the Middle Ages brought Jews together on Holy Cross Day, under pain of death, to listen to conversion sermons. Browning reminds us what the Jews might say:

Fee, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!
Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week.
Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,
Stinking and savory, smug and gruff,
Take the church road, for the bell's due chime
Gives us the summons—'tis sermon time.

This—or a Hebrew equivalent—may very well have been in the minds of Jews at Modin, a small town near Jerusalem, when their turn came to be converted. Some were of a mind to eat, no doubt, with "Fee, faw, fum!" Some felt themselves constrained to refuse and thus perish by the sword. The town Hellenizer had just stepped forward to be first to partake of that obscene communion, when in one old man, Mattathias, a priest, "indignation burst forth for judgment"—he sprang out, struck and killed the acquiescent Jew, slew the Syrian, led in demolishing the unclean altar; then—crying, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him follow me!"—with his five sons he fled into the wilderness.

There they were joined—cautiously at first, but in greater and greater numbers—by countrymen who had found it hard to stomach Temple reform: ordinary, inarticulate people, plain Jews you might call them, who had been lashed to frenzy by having been denied religious rites which they—more than the wealthy and educated classes—practiced; and a concept of God which they—better than their high priesthood—understood. A Hellenizer could not fight with like fervor for the abrogation of Judaism. Nor was the mercenary army of Antiochus any match for these fanatics.

The Maccabean revolt succeeded, where previous rebellions had failed, chiefly because until that time Jewish patriots had magnificently fought every weekday only to let themselves be butchered on the Sabbath. The law forbade work on the seventh day: they would not lift a finger even to build a barricade round the caves they hid in, and were slaughtered in thousands by Syrian troops who learned, naturally, to wait till the weekend to attack. Indignation once more served Mattathias for judgment: he decreed that on the Sabbath Jews might pardonably bear arms in self-defense. Bickerman declares this to be the Hellenizer's principal victory: for to save any part of Judaism, a central precept—the Sabbath, at all costs the Sabbath—had to go. Mattathias's judgment in this matter coincided with that of Rabbi Simeon ben Menassiah, three centuries later, who declared: "The Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath." Despite this classic Jewish formulation, to certain Jews in every generation the issue has seemed anything but academic. During the recent war in Israel, die-hard Orthodox Jews of Jerusalem stoned their own soldiers of the Haganah for working on the Sabbath to erect stone barricades essential to protect the Orthodox quarter of Jerusalem from Arab attack.

MATTATHIAS died, and the command went to his third son Judah—the Maccabee, the Hammer—who was also a hero. (Fortunately, heroes have been another persistently recurring Jewish type.) During the next four years Judah met with astonishing military success, the luck of a guerrilla captain in hill country. With outright victory finally his in the field, nothing prevented him from entering Jerusalem; Syria had recently torn down that city's walls. And once within the city, Judah and his army headed straight for the Temple, exclaiming, "Behold, our enemies are discomfited; let us go up to cleanse the Holy Place and rededicate it."

"And they saw our sanctuary laid desolate, and the altar profaned, and our gates burned up; and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest or upon one of the mountains. . . . And they fell on their faces to the ground, and blew the solemn blasts upon the trumpets, and cried unto Heaven."

First they pulverized the golden statue of Antiochus Olympius. Then they took apart the desecrated altars, stone from very stone, piling the stones in a convenient place on the Temple mount "until a prophet should come and decide concerning them." They gathered whole stones to construct new altars, rehung the colored veils, swept and sanded, baked shewbread; they broke their backs joyfully over God's housekeeping. And our rabbis say that when all was done God thanked them with a miracle—the miracle of the oil.

"The Hasmoneans searched, and found only one small cruse, which still had on it the seal of the High Priest, which had not been defiled. Now there was no more oil than sufficed to kindle the lights in the Temple one day; and a miracle took place, for them to kindle lights with it for eight days"—until the priests had time to prepare new oil for the ever-burning lamps. During these eight days people celebrated "with songs and harps, and lutes, and with cymbals. . . . And they decked the forefront of the Temple with crowns of gold, and small shields, and . . . furnished the chambers of the priests with doors."

It was a gay sight, a time to remember. "Judah and his brethren and the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their seasons year by year for eight days, from the twenty-fifth of the month Kislev, with gladness and joy." Jews set menorahs, one for each member of the family, at every doorpost of their houses and before their gates; no doubt mothers let their children run around to see the Chanukah decorations.

Concerning the kindling of this menorah, the school of Hillel decreed: start with one light and mount to eight; the school of Shammai decreed: start with eight lights and descend to one. The Hillelite view prevailed.

Judah the Maccabee wasn't always victorious—he died in a lost battle. But this was his hour. With his disreputable descendants, the Hasmonean kings, our holiday has absolutely nothing to do. Judah and his brethren gave us a victory to celebrate—a military victory, of all things.

But it was not entirely a military victory. There is a passage from the Prophets which our rabbis prescribed for the Sabbath of Chanukah: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6). And in the chronicles of our own times, it is said that during the last siege of Jerusalem—as desperate a siege as any in our history—one old Jew ran through the streets shouting, "Jews! Things are getting serious. You can't depend on a miracle any longer. *Zagt tillim*—Say your prayers!"

SELF-HATRED AND JEWISH CHAUVINISM

Some Reflections on "Positive Jewishness"

CLEMENT GREENBERG

ONE looks into oneself and discovers there what is also in others. A realization of the Jewish self-hatred in myself, of its subtlety and the devious ways in which it conceals itself, from me as well as from the world outside, explains many things that used to puzzle me in the behavior of my fellow Jews. I do not think that in this respect I am projecting upon others faults I find in myself; it is only reluctantly that I have become persuaded that self-hatred in one form or another is almost universal among Jews—or at least much more prevalent than is commonly thought or admitted—and that it is not confined on the whole to Jews like myself.

The term "self-hatred" was first applied to what is better defined as the Jewish inferiority complex—which is, strictly speaking, more self-doubt and self-contempt than actual self-hatred—by the late Theodor Lessing, a German Jewish writer, in a rather unsatisfactory book on the subject called *Der Jüdische Selbsthass* which was published in the late 20's. The social causes of this self-hatred were dealt with more satisfactorily by the late Kurt Lewin, a sociologist who came to America from Germany, in an article that appeared in the *Contemporary Jewish Record* of June 1941 under the title "Self-Hatred Among Jews." Dr. Lewin wrote then: "It is recognized in sociology that the members of the lower social strata tend to accept the fashions, values, and ideals of the higher strata. In the case of the underprivileged group it means that their opinions about themselves are greatly influenced by the low esteem the majority has for them. This . . . heightens the tendency of the Jew with a negative balance [i.e., the Jew who finds his identity as a Jew too much of a psychological handicap] to cut himself loose from things Jewish. . . . Being unable to cut himself entirely loose from his Jewish connections and his Jewish past, the hatred turns upon himself. . . ."

This states the case well enough as far as my own experience is concerned. But when Dr. Lewin suggests that "A strong feeling of being part and parcel of the group and having a positive attitude toward it is, for children and adults alike, the sufficient condition for the avoidance of attitudes based on self-hatred," he reveals that he did not go any further inside the problem than was required in order to describe it. He saw the signs of self-hatred too exclusively in an outwardly negative attitude toward fellow Jews and things Jewish, and took the absence of self-hatred for granted wherever a Jew made no bones about his "group belongingness" and accepted his Jewish connections. It does not seem so simple as that to me. Nor, perhaps, was it really so simple as that for Dr. Lewin. Otherwise he would not have reasoned in a circle.

If to have a positive attitude toward the group is *ipso facto* to be without self-hatred, the positiveness is the result of the cure, not, as Dr. Lewin suggested, its means. Nor, for

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THE Jewish "inferiority complex" is customarily regarded as a phenomenon of assimilationism. CLEMENT GREENBERG, who has been associate editor of COMMENTARY since its founding, thinks otherwise, and in this self-searching personal essay argues that "self-hatred" is a problem for almost every Jew in our society, and not least for those who most clamantly affirm their "positive Jewishness." Critically examining solutions currently offered to ease the heart of self-blame, failure, or insecurity growing out of inferior status, he indicates the direction in which he believes the remedy lies. Mr. Greenberg was born in New York City in 1909, was brought up in Norfolk, Va., and Brooklyn, and received his college education at Syracuse University. He was formerly an editor of *Partisan Review* and art critic of the *Nation*. His book on Joan Miró, the Catalan painter, was published in 1948.

that matter, is feeling "part and parcel of the group" such a sure antidote. The pressure of the larger society within which we live, according to whose traditions the Jews as a whole do not cut an attractive figure (have we not been, as Felix Frankfurter says, "the most vilified and persecuted minority in history"?), is far too strong to enable one to escape self-hatred simply by feeling oneself 100 per cent Jewish. On the contrary, such a feeling may even increase self-hatred. The pressure of the opinions of the larger society reaches everywhere, even into theological seminaries, and one may well resent oneself all the more for sensing oneself undilutedly Jewish.

The crux of the difficulty presented by self-hatred, as it affects the American Jew, lies in the different ways that it is acted out. The "negative" Jew, fleeing his Jewishness, expresses his self-hatred directly, even if he rationalizes it in some cases by maintaining that there is really no other difference than that of religion between himself and Gentiles (forgetting that he is quite aware that there is more than a religious difference between Anglo-Saxon and, for instance, Irish Gentiles). Or, in other cases, he may express his self-hatred even more openly by admitting that he dislikes Jews and things Jewish even though he is a Jew himself; then he will argue, most likely, that he is not like other Jews and therefore hasn't enough Jewishness in himself to cause him to feel self-hatred. Either way the self-hatred is not diminished, for all the directness with which it is expressed, and remains to corrode one's character. And it is compounded by a lie—namely, that Jewishness is a mere accidental detail, or that the Jew in question is less "Jewish" than other Jews. (No matter how much he may repeat this lie to himself, no Jew ever succeeds in believing it, whence stems that hidden anguish which is present in so many "inauthentic," genteel, and Gentilized Jews—the anguish, that is, of not being able to believe something one wants very much to.)

The "positive" or "affirmative" Jew is supposedly the opposite of this kind of Jew. Apparently, he, the "positive" Jew, has no self-hatred to express; he asserts, seeks out, and revels in his Jewishness. The question then is, ought his behavior be accepted at face value? Does he mean it all the way down? Was he free from self-hatred to start with? Or, if not, did he succeed in dealing with it in such a way that he became entirely free of it? If the latter is the case, then Jews like myself must sit at his feet and learn from him.

But what do I see when I take a longer look? That the Jewishness of so many of these "positive" Jews is truculent, and very sensitive to criticism; that it is also aggressive and uncharitable; that it points to itself too challengingly and has too little patience with conceptions of Jewishness other than its own; that it is too prone to polemical violence and name-calling; that, in the end, it faces outward too much and seems to get too little satisfaction from its own self. Were these "positive" Jews really and truly in possession of themselves as Jews, would they not be more at ease—even a little complacent? It is this absence of ease that makes me suspect that a certain familiar psychological mechanism is at work here. By projecting it upon others and attacking it violently in others, these "positive" Jews may be exorcising from their own consciousness an image of the Jew that is no less "negative" than that in the mind of the most cringing "assimilationist."*

[illegible]

II

"Positive Judaism" has been with us for quite a while now, but it has not yet succeeded in persuading me that it is more than a circumlocutory name for a new phase of Jewish nationalism in which it becomes more like other nationalisms, to the point of being infected with chauvinism.

Chauvinism, or rabid nationalism, history tells us, is a means usually of compensating for a sense of collective inadequacy or failure. As a sentiment shared by responsible people, it does not appear among nations that have enjoyed a successful history; thus it is not customarily associated with the national feelings of Americans and most Western European peoples. It is among the oppressed, frustrated, or backward peoples of Central and Eastern Europe that it has been most virulent. There we find Germans asserting Germanism, Russians Slavism, Magyars Magyarism, Lithuanians Lithuanianism as absolute ends in themselves and not needing generalization in terms of any broader value in order to be made the supreme criteria of all things on earth and in heaven. There we also find that self-consciousness about national traits which is preoccupied with determining, as the case may be, what is uniquely German or Russian, who is German or Russian, what makes Germans or Russians superior to all others, how one can go about becoming more German or Russian, and so forth.

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*Witness, for example, that innocent and lamentable delight with which so many "affirmative" Jews call attention to the prevalence of blondness and blue eyes among the Israeli youth. The phenomenon has been noted with the greatest satisfaction in precisely the most nationalist Jewish magazines and books. Yet we are always quite sure that the high value the American Negro puts on a light complexion is a symptom of his self-hatred. !?

We Jews have known something of this kind of self-preoccupation for a long time, albeit without nationalism, and while it often betrays the fact that we simply find ourselves more interesting than Gentiles, it is also the symptom of a collective feeling of self-doubt. But the self-doubt has, usually, to become general and very uncomfortable before it can furnish the fuel for chauvinism, and it is also necessary for the people concerned to have had some first taste of success.

It is with its first taste of success that a people musters up the nerve to begin actively compensating for its sense of inferiority—usually by arrogance and self-praise. Yet it continues to feel itself in the position of an upstart and is still afraid that it won't be treated with sufficient respect. Along with this goes a suspicion that the success was accidental and unearned anyhow, and one has to discover virtues in oneself that prove the opposite and quiet the suspicion. Certainly chauvinism has nothing to do with self-confidence or a truly "positive attitude" toward one's group. German nationalism became widely chauvinist only after the Franco-Prussian War, and the Germans still had—and have—one of the deepest inferiority complexes of any territorially unified people. It is not for nothing that Goethe, Thomas Mann, and others have seen similarities between the inner attitudes of Germans and Jews.

However real or unreal these similarities may be, some of the parallels that have appeared between Jewish and German nationalism—especially the post-1918 variety of the latter—cannot at all be written off as "literature." This, no matter how painful I, as a Jew, find any resemblance between German nationalism and things Jewish: which is all the more reason why Jewish chauvinism is distressing to contemplate. Nor is the possibility of these parallels decreased by the fact that there are many similarities in the pattern of the rise itself of the two nationalisms. Like the German, Jewish nationalism was born of a history of humiliation and defeat, and required a sharp blow or succession of blows in order to be awakened to action: the pogroms of czarist Russian and the growth of secular and doctrinaire anti-Semitism were for us what subjection to Napoleon was to the Germans. The decisive shock, without which Jewish nationalism might still have remained the province largely of East European Jewish intellectuals, was Hitler's destruction of six millions of us, which has been the equivalent (and much, much more) of what the 1918 defeat was for the Germans. However, the victory in Palestine did for us *after* our disaster what their defeat of France in 1870 had done for the Germans *before* their disaster: it gave us a first taste of real success, of success won on our own. And it is only since then, apparently, that Jewish chauvinism has become a serious possibility.

Are we to fold our hands and resign ourselves to Jewish chauvinism with the excuse that the same historical factors that produced chauvinism in other peoples cannot be prevented from doing so in Jews and that we might as well bow our heads to necessity? The necessity is not pleasant, especially when we see how much like German chauvinism the Jewish variety can be. Is not Jewish identity, as a mere fact, being made a primary virtue, as the Germans made their Germanness one? Is not a "Jewishness" defined almost entirely in terms of group loyalty and group conformity, and whose only content is its function as differentiation, being elevated as the supreme criterion by which everything and every Jew is to be judged? Worst of all, have not some of us become too quick to hate and too intemperate in our abuse of fellow Jews who disagree with us?

CHAUVINISM has had a fairly long history by now, long enough to make us all familiar with its practical liabilities as well as its purely aesthetic uglinesses. And one might expect that, in spite of the historical factors that encourage it among us, we Jews might have become immunized to it by all the suffering it has caused us at the hands of other people. But even if this expectation is bound to be disappointed since human beings are what they are, surely a people as literate and rational as we should not at this late date be deceived by our own chauvinism. We should be able to recognize that it no more denies a collective inferiority complex in our case than it has in that of other peoples.*

Actually, chauvinism—which in America means Jewish separatism—intensifies self-hatred by concealing and dissembling it, by sinking it into depths of the psyche where it becomes all the more malignant because out of sight. Remaining invisible, retreating at most, but not disappearing, self-hatred prompts us to go to ever greater lengths to convince ourselves that we have extirpated it—to strut and posture and boast. We become too prone to violent words if not violent deeds. Yet we succeed no better than before in coming to terms with ourselves, and only exchange one expression of self-hatred for another, more indirect and deceptive one.

III

BUT I do not wish to argue that the self-hatred which the "positive" Jew hides is exactly the same as that which the "negative," furtive Jew reveals. The "positive" Jew and his spiritual ancestors do, after all, embody the Jewish group consciousness more than do most other Jews. The "positive" Jew has accepted the burden as well as the rewards involved in that. He fights as best he knows how for Jewish self-respect, and whatever he wins redounds to the benefit of all other Jews.

I am aware, moreover, of all that in Jewish history would justify an excessive nationalism on our part. The attitude of the non-Jewish world—the chief cause of our self-hatred—provides a strong practical as well as psychological argument for the uses of a Jewish national selfishness. Those of us who are sick of Europe after Auschwitz and want to have nothing more to do with Gentiles have a right for the moment to indulge our feelings, if only to recover from the trauma. But humanity in general is still the highest value and not all Gentiles are anti-Semitic. Self-pity turned a good many Germans into swine, and it can do the same to others, regardless of how much their self-pity is justified. No matter how necessary it may be to indulge our feelings about Auschwitz, we can do so only temporarily and privately; we certainly cannot let them determine Jewish policy either in Israel or outside it.

Like the spokesmen of national consciousness everywhere, most nationalist Jews want above all else power for their people, or at least the show of power. And who can say that they are not justified? Power is essential at least insofar as it means being able to take more of our fate into our own hands instead of suffering it as passive objects. Yet the nationalist tends to accept too implicitly the decisions rendered by power.

It is precisely because of his sensitivity to questions of power that the self-hatred of the nationalist Jew has been greatly aggravated by the scale and mode in which Hitler slaughtered us. The nationalist Jew wants

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*"Among Negro—and Jewish—school children, it has been found, those who recognize their minority status most clearly are also those who feel most ashamed of the low status of their group; in them 'group pride' and 'self-hatred' seem inextricably mixed."—From a review by Miriam Reimann of Arnold Rose's book *The Negro's Morale: Group Identification and Protest* that appeared in the October COMMENTARY.

more *from,* as well as for, his people in the way of self-reliance and force, and feels humiliated by the ease with which the Nazis were able to kill most of our six millions. And he cannot help fearing, whatever his reason may tell him, that the scale and, even more, the mode of that slaughter were somehow a judgment upon us. Unlike the "negative" Jew, however, who may fear the same thing, he does not flee the whole question and try to wipe it from his mind by pretending that he is not like other Jews and so does not have to regard the fate of the six millions as in any way a judgment on himself. He remains identified and he remains with his fear and shame, to struggle with them as best he can. The trouble is that he, of all Jews, is the one least equipped to think through the problem.

It is, of course, more than time that we all began to make a real effort to digest the fact of Auschwitz psychologically, if only to eliminate a source of self-hatred that—unlike its other sources—is not deeply rooted in the fabric of the larger American society that surrounds us. But if the "positive" Jews don't want to start the necessary discussion, none of us others seems to want to either. Not only is the mind unable to come to terms with the dimensions of the event and so resolve some of its oppressiveness, and not only does it prefer to remain numbed in order to spare itself the pain; as I have just said, the mind has a tendency, deep down, to look on a calamity of that order as a punishment that must have been deserved. How could it have happened, on that scale and in that way, if it were not? But why deserved? For what? The mind doesn't know, but it fears—fears in an utterly irrational and amoral, if not immoral, way that we were punished for being unable to take the risk of defending ourselves. No moral considerations enter in, as there used to, to relieve our feelings when we were persecuted; we were not punished by God for having transgressed—for no people could have sinned enough against any moral code to draw down such a punishment from any just God. We were punished by history, and, given the extent to which we, and especially the nationalists among us, accept the standards of judgment upon which all the world acts, the recognition that history usually punishes people only for being helpless does not diminish the shame involved. Disaster becomes punishment, and punishment proves that one is inferior because one is not able to avert it. (André Gide says somewhere that the French too tend to feel that their defeat, in 1940, has made them morally guilty.)

The rise of a militant, aggressive Jewish nationalism is in large part an answer to this state of mind. There are, I repeat, other than psychological reasons to justify Jewish militancy in this period, but I think we really feel the psychological ones as more urgent. We have to show the world and ourselves that "Jews can fight." Whether we shall ever succeed in proving this to our own satisfaction I don't know. But to behave like chauvinists and view the matter wholly in terms of physical aggressiveness won't do it. The main struggle, at least for us in America, still has to be fought inside ourselves. It is there, and only there, that we can convince ourselves that Auschwitz, while it may have been a historical judgment, was not a verdict upon our intrinsic worth as a people. Exactly how we can do this I am not competent to say, but I do know that it has to be done, and that in order to do it we shall have to be much franker with ourselves about self-hatred—and other things—than hitherto.

JEWISH militancy has its enlightened as well as its obscurantist side, nevertheless, and I myself am all for applying a measure of militancy here as well as in Israel. Modern anti-Semitism, being what it is, gathers momentum instead of expending itself when it goes unresisted beyond a certain point. I believe that it is best coped with in this country, once that point is reached, by direct personal action on the part of individual Jews, and it would be all to the good if our new Jewish nationalism could move us to take such matters as Joe McWilliams into our own hands instead of calling the policeman. I also believe that this would contribute importantly to the lessening of our self-hatred.

Then it's a question of dealing with anti-Semites by individual force? It is—and more. It is also a question of releasing that pent-up, frightened, and festering aggressiveness which supplies the fuel for rabid nationalism, and shifting the emphasis of militancy from the mass, where it runs the danger of becoming chauvinist and irresponsible, to the individual. Jewishness, insofar as it has to be asserted in a predominantly Gentile world, should be a personal rather than mass manifestation, and more a matter of individual self-reliance. This does not mean overlooking one's responsibility to one's fellow Jews, but it does mean making Jewishness something other than a product of herd warmth and an occasion for that herd conformity out of which arise the ugliest manifestations of nationalism—as we saw in the German case.

As a herd manifestation, nationalism becomes a means of enslaving rather than of liberating the group. The herd elevates mediocrities into positions of power and influence, for only mediocrity can express it to its own satisfaction. The abuse that some "positive" Jews—rabbis, journalists, and others—are so ready to turn upon fellow Jews who refuse to make a fetish of their, the "positive" Jews', conception of Jewishness, is, among other things, a symptom of the kind of jealous fear felt by ambitious mediocrity, as it is also of a secret self-hatred. Only mediocrities, or people with hidden guilt, react so violently—and often irrelevantly—to criticism and dissent.

The East European background of most of the present leaders and spokesmen of Jewish nationalism is another factor that tends to exaggerate it. They cannot, in their political function, wholly escape the effects of the backward environment in which they grew up. Politics in Eastern and also Central Europe was involved primarily with ethnic issues and therefore encouraged national fanaticism. At the same time the only counterpoise to the disorder of a decaying feudalist society was, and apparently still is, regimentation. The social responsibility that the individual has learned to assume as a matter of course in the West is there inculcated, it would appear, only by mass organizations and factional discipline. I can understand why there are "marching youth" in Israel, and party uniforms, and why loyalty to a political party often competes with loyalty to the state. These stigmata of political backwardness will probably not disappear until Eastern Europe becomes a less vivid memory, the Oriental Jews are successfully absorbed, and Israel herself has enjoyed a security like America's or Britain's or Switzerland's for a generation. But to understand is still not to assent.

Specifically Jewish political activity in this country is open to the same influences, since most of those who are "Jewishly" politically conscious among us come from Eastern Europe too, or have been formed by fathers and mothers who did. This, however, has not been enough to secure the regimentation of Jewish political life in America because, fortunately, our larger society is advanced and solid enough to overcome transplanted backwardness in less than a generation. We do not have to pick our way through the wreckage and poverty of a dying feudal society; we do not live in ethnic enclaves; here bourgeois enlightenment has become a good deal of an official reality, and we are citizens rather than nationals. And most of us, Jews and Gentiles, are urbanized. This is why so much of what goes as Jewish political and cultural thought in this country—cultural autonomy on Mordecai M. Kaplan's model and ethnic-plus-religious separatism on Abba Hillel Silver's*—is so utterly irrelevant to the lives actually led by American Jews—even more irrelevant than the imported Bolshevism of the 30's, another product of the political backwardness of Eastern Europe, was to the lives of Americans in general. This is

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*Rabbi Silver castigates the editors and writers of this magazine (without actually naming it) as "uprooted intellectuals" (*The Day*, July 16, 1950). I should like to remind the Rabbi that the term "uprooted intellectual" has been and is a favorite in the totalitarian (and anti-Semitic) lexicon of abuse, from Mussolini and Hitler to Stalin, and that wherever we hear it we can be sure that we shall also hear demagogy and obscurantism. (And, incidentally, what is it that Rabbi Silver is "rooted" in?)

why "positive Judaism" and all the other varieties of Jewish nationalism still remain nothing but fuel for oratory and journalism.

IV

What the "positive" Jews have been unable to do so far is show us how the Jewish consciousness and Jewish belongingness they invoke would affect the texture and fiber of our lives as we live them in New York, Detroit, and Dallas. We know from experience how observance of the 613 prescriptions would change them, but the "positive" Jews appear to mean more than that—and less. One can be a rigidly Orthodox Jew and still be as exposed as any other American to the effects of our machine-made culture; one can still rotate from Canasta to the movies, from the radio to the television set, from over-shopping to over-eating, even if there is time out on Saturday. The "positive" Jews want to urge something more on us. I applaud them for the desire but still wish to see them become more relevant and hear phrases that are less empty come from their mouths. They still do not confront our lives honestly and from any other fundamental standpoint than the abstract and basically irrelevant one of institutionalism and politics. Nor, worst of all, do they confront themselves and recognize their own variety of "negative" Jewishness. They still say nothing, therefore, to those other Jews like myself, who make no claim to being "positive" and know that we suffer from insecurity as Jews.

What we might ask of our new Jewish self-consciousness is that it liberate rather than organize us—liberate us from the pressure of that kind of self-consciousness which weakens us as individuals because it makes us define ourselves too much in terms of the group, whether positively or negatively. In so doing we do violence to ourselves as personalities and interfere with that self-realization which I conceive as one of the primary goals of human striving.

The ultra-assimilationist Jew does violence to himself as a human being pure and simple, as well as Jew, because he tries to make himself more typically English, French, or German than any Anglo-Saxon, Gaul, or Teuton ever is. He over-defines himself, in group terms, in the effort to prove he is more English or French than Jewish—which means, really, that he always acts with reference to his Jewishness, even if it is an entirely negative reference. The nationalist Jew, too, always acts with reference to his Jewishness. But even though it is an ostensibly positive reference, by the too great strenuousness of his effort to assert his Jewishness he likewise over-defines himself in group terms. Both the assimilationist and the nationalist leave too little room for their native personalities. While there is no such thing as a human being in general, there is also no such thing as a complete Jew or a complete Englishman.

What I want to be able to do is accept my Jewishness more implicitly, so implicitly that I can use it to realize myself as a human being in my own right, and *as a Jew in my own right*. I want to feel free to be whatever I need to be and delight in being as a personality without being typed or prescribed to as a Jew or, for that matter, as an American. I am both Jew and American naturally, simply because I cannot help being them, having been born and brought up what I am. But I do not want to make any more issue of being a Jew—unless I am forced to by such things as anti-Semitism—than an enlightened Englishman makes of being English. And I want to overcome my self-hatred in order to be more myself, not in order to be a "good Jew." For I don't recognize "good Jews" any more than I do "good Americans," "good Englishmen," or "good Chinese." Nor do I feel that Jews who are "positively," nationalistically, or religiously Jewish are "better" Jews than I. I recognize only Jews who are more self-reliantly Jewish than myself and therefore more at one with themselves, and braver and more spontaneous.

But what about my responsibility to fellow Jews, I shall be asked—what about the Jewish community and Jewish survival? My relation to the Jewish community should be as much a personal and spontaneous expression of myself as anything else; that is, it should be a natural one and not legislated to me by an ideology—not any more than my relation to the American community is. And my responsibility to fellow Jews is something taken for granted in the first place, and for a variety of reasons that do not have to be gone into here—and which hardly concern the self-hatred I want to get rid of.

As for Jewish survival, all I can say is that if we can survive only by all of us becoming nationalists, then we Jews have lost all justification for persisting as a group. I feel, however, that we shall persist as Jews, no matter how assimilated we become in our customs and manners, as long as Jewishness remains essential to our sense of our individual selves, as long as it is the truth about our individual selves. And we shall have a better chance of surviving "Jewishly" if the truth that is our Jewishness becomes one that we prefer rather than one that is felt as due only to an unfortunate "accident" of birth. Which the "positive" self-hating Jew feels to be just as much an accident as does the "negative" one. . . .

I SHOULD like to be more specific and concrete, but I cannot because I do not have the complete answer to self-hatred. The non-Jewish world, as long as it clings to its unfavorable notion of the Jew in general, will always make impossible the entire extirpation of self-hatred in the Diaspora.* All I claim is that we can rid ourselves of a good deal of it, despite the world's attitude, by bringing it out into the open, and by becoming aware of what it causes us to do and say. Let us express our discomfort as Jews more directly, without falsifying it by an ineffective sublimation, as the "positive" Jew does, or by a spurious rationality or an equally spurious forgetfulness, as the "negative" Jew does. The sense of Jewish inferiority is there, but less of it will be there the moment we acknowledge it and begin to realize just how and where we act upon it. And the more we acknowledge it the less, I feel sure, we shall act upon it.

Until then no amount of Jewish education or programs for Jewish cultural endeavor will help very much. These tend to become means rather of evading and hiding the problem. For though they are designed to combat Jewish self-hatred, their sponsors are too afraid of naming it to know where to seek it out. We fool ourselves with fine-sounding phrases. The problem has to be focused directly in the individual Jew and discussed in personal, not communal, terms. For self-hatred is as intimate a thing as love.

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*See in this connection an article by Yehezkel Kaufman, "Anti-Semitic Stereotypes in Zionism," that appeared in English translation in the March 1949 COMMENTARY.

FREEDOM FOR RADIO AND TV?

The Risks Involved

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

THE most important inventions for the 20th century may well turn out to be, not the automobile and the atom bomb, but the moving picture and the radio. Few would deny that the printing press affected mankind even more than the steam engine, and the cases are parallel. For the first time since Gutenberg we have new mechanical devices whose effect upon the intellectual and emotional lives of the entire population is direct rather than indirect. Four centuries have not been sufficient to make the printed page as popular as the screen and the loudspeaker became in one generation. At this moment books are as important to only an almost negligible proportion of the population as the movies and the radio are to the great majority.

Not everyone thought the printing press likely to be a blessing. No longer than a century and a half ago there were educated and responsible persons who believed that universal literacy inevitably spelled disaster. Moreover, there will certainly be those today who will say that, fundamentally, those to whom the movies and the radio appear as threats are motivated by the same "fear of the people" which inspired the opponents of popular literacy. If the cases of the radio and the printing press are parallel, why, they will ask, may not the supposed problems solve themselves in the same happy ways? Every attempt to regulate printing was ill advised; every complaint about the "trash" which got printed was, in the long run, unimportant even when not unjustified. The book trade and its public solved their problems in the best possible way. Why should not the broadcasters and their audience be expected to do the same?

It is well, I think, to raise these simple questions at the beginning of any discussion of the subject because to ask them is to be led immediately to ask two others. One is the question how closely, in actual fact, the cases of the printing press and the radio really are everywhere parallel. The other might be put bluntly thus: Does the fact that Western civilization was able to absorb and utilize the forces released by the printing press necessarily mean that it can survive the much more rapidly developed and much more widely effective forces liberated by an instrument for mass education, indoctrination, and corruption which can be brought immediately to bear upon persons who need not first go through even the minimum intellectual discipline required in order to learn how to read?

History does not usually repeat itself and the problems raised for society by the introduction of new techniques become difficult to solve for the very reason that they frequently tend to render inapplicable the general principles upon the basis of which we have become accustomed to deal with the less fundamental problems which arise when no revolutionary novelty is involved. Nothing could illustrate better what this means than the first of the questions which radio broadcasting involves, the question that is, "Shall or shall it not be 'free'?"

OUR first tendency would be to answer that question on the analogy of the printing press. But it becomes immediately apparent, not that the answer is wrong, but that, because of one simple fact, it is not an answer at all. Radio transmitters interfere with one another. You cannot take the position that anyone who has anything to say should be allowed to put up a radio transmitter and

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say it, exactly as anyone who has something to say in print can buy a printing press. If the available channels were not assigned as a monopoly to certain broadcasters radio could not exist at all. But the concept of monopoly and the concept of unlimited free speech are simply incompatible.

It is true, of course, that the right of everyone to publish a newspaper is, for economic reasons, often a merely theoretical right. But what is an imperfection in the theory of the right of the free press becomes a simple self-contradiction when applied to any possible attitude of the government towards radio. You cannot solve the problem of freedom on the air by reference to the principles which served for the printed page.

Moreover, to the suggestion that if "the people" could be trusted to choose for themselves whatever was offered them to read then they can be trusted to choose also from among the programs offered them on the air, there are at least two objections. One is that since the radio is in the hands of a few powerful monopolies, the people's choice is far more limited than it is in the case of books or magazines or newspapers. The other objection is less obvious. Reading involves at least a minimum of intellectual effort. On the whole, the people who read most are those of superior intellect. Inevitably, the publisher, even to some extent the yellow journalist, appeals to what is relatively the keenest part of the population and on the whole (at least until the invention of yellow journalism) the more intelligent a person was the more likely he was to be affected by what he read. But the radio, like the movies, makes its greatest appeal to those least likely to read seriously or well. It opens up to the influence of deliberate propaganda or merely commercialized vulgarity that very section of the public least capable of intellectual criticism or even of knowing its own mind. It threatens to make this not merely the age of the common man but the age when the commonest man is the one most easily, most effectively, and most profitably appealed to.

Some realization of these facts disturbs every attempt to discuss the question what to do about radio, whether it be in terms of practical, detailed management and regulation or in terms of the largest general principles. Certain technical and economic problems are puzzling enough, but even if they did not exist there would still remain the fact that we have no really relevant historical experience to appeal to. The advocates of *laissez faire* cannot claim that their faith in the ability of things to work themselves out was ever put to a really parallel test. On the other hand, the advocates of government control cannot say that any government which planned from above what its citizens should be told and how their tastes and opinions should be molded ever had so effective an instrument for its purposes.

A RECENT book, *Radio, Television, and Society,* by Charles A. Siepmann (Oxford), undertakes to summarize the history of radio and to outline the problems which it raises. The author, now chairman of the department of communications in education at New York University, has had excellent opportunities in government service and elsewhere to learn his subject at first hand. His book is concerned principally with facts and with an exposition, as impartial as possible, of the attitudes and the arguments of various groups, both inside and outside the industry. He proposes no answer to the questions raised and though he is not unaware of even the largest implications he tends to subordinate them to the factual and expository material. His book could hardly be either clearer or fairer. Anyone who wants to know where radio stands today, and how it got where it is, could not do better than to read it. And anyone who wishes to go on from there to take a position or advocate a course of action would be well advised to prepare himself by assimilating the information this book has to give.

Mr. Siepmann begins with a historical sketch from which the most important fact to emerge is simply that the two most significant features of American radio as an institution are not the result of either the government's farsighted intentions or of any long-range conspiracy on the part of the industry.

They are simply the result of fumbling attempts on the part of both to discover some *modus vivendi.* Our radio is under mild and tentative government control because the early broadcasters soon realized that unless they asked the government to assume authority over the broadcast channels the airways would soon be carrying nothing except an unintelligible babble of interfering voices; and because the government, having agreed, set up a commission whose powers were intentionally ill defined and whose probable operations no one could see clearly. Our radio is dominated by the advertiser, not because the first of even the commercial broadcasters saw its possibilities as an advertising medium, but simply because those possibilities developed. The first commercial stations were operated by the manufacturers of receiving sets and they assumed that the cost of the operations would be paid for out of the profits of the receivers for which the transmitters created a demand. When advertising was first introduced it was supposed that the public would at best (or worst) stand for only a very little of it, and only after experience revealed how much they would take did the broadcaster find himself a mere adjunct to the advertising agency.

After describing the situation in the United States, Mr. Siepmann compares it with that in other countries. Nowhere else is it exactly the same. Two extremes are represented, on the one hand by our country where broadcasting comes nearest to being a free commercial enterprise in the classic *laissez faire* sense of the term and, on the other hand, by the Iron Curtain countries where it is a tight government monopoly designed in every detail to serve government purposes. Not unexpectedly, British broadcasting stands almost exactly in the middle between these two extremes and, no less expectedly, the relation of the British Broadcasting Company to the British government is as difficult to describe as that of the unwritten constitution to the powers of the House of Commons. The BBC is ultimately responsible to Parliament, but Parliament does not tell it what to do. In practice the company attempts to compromise between the principle that the people should have what they want and the principle that the government should give them what they ought to have. The compromise consists in the presentation of three separate programs on three different cultural and intellectual levels, all offered in the pious hope that a part at least of the great public will climb the steps of the ladder thus provided.

With relentless impartiality Mr. Siepmann summarizes the arguments of the advocates of both the American and the British systems. To the British, ours seems merely a method for catering to the lowest common denominator and for seeing to it at the same time that the masses shall be so miseducated that the lowest common denominator will drop lower and lower. To the official spokesmen for the American industry this same method seems unassailably sound. Its triumphant success—against which only a few malcontents grumble—is proof that it provides the public with what the public wants; and, as one of them said recently in a statement made too late for Mr. Siepmann to quote, to call American radio cheap or vulgar or stupid is to call the average American cheap and vulgar and stupid—which obviously, so he implied, is not far from treason.

To the spokesmen for the American industry the British system is based upon an aristocratic conception of society since it distrusts the tastes and the intelligence of the people. Against it there has also been raised a somewhat subtler objection. Its operation is largely in the hands of a single director who has chosen to use his power non-politically, perhaps, but nevertheless in the interests of a certain definable conception of education and the public good. His ideal is the traditional ideal of "culture" and, so it has been said, we simply cannot afford in our present desperate state to have our most powerful instrument of mass education devoted largely to traditional cultural rather than to political enlightenment.

Even without raising the question in how nearly absolute a sense it is true that the people should be given what they prefer, one naturally asks whether they are satisfied with what they are getting. So far as Americans are concerned, the answer supplied by the public opinion polls seems to be "Yes." A very large part of the population is passionately devoted to the radio and has no major complaint to make against it. But, surprisingly enough, the English public and the Swedish public are both about equally well satisfied with what they get—despite the fact that it is something very different. Does that mean that our tastes are equally unlike, or simply that in every case the great mass of the people is so uncritical, so unenterprising, so avid of anything which it can get without cost and without effort, that it is all but incapable of preferring one thing to another? If so, and it seems at least partly so, the possibilities of what a totalitarian government or a conscienceless industry could do to it and with it are even more terrifying than is generally supposed.

American broadcasters can argue that since their only aim is to give the public what it wants and since the public obviously wants what it does give them, then any radio controlled by the government would have either to give them what they get now or cease to follow democratic principles. But even if we assume that the public actually does know in some positive fashion what it wants, the problem of majority rule versus minority rights is raised in a peculiarly acute form. Does every desire of the public have equal weight with every other desire, and to what extent should the members of a minority be thought to have no claim to consideration merely because it is a minority of which they are members?

Suppose that ten men want jazz for every one who wants Mozart. What would be the truly democratic procedure? To give no Mozart at all; to give exactly one-tenth as much Mozart as jazz; or to give, say, half as much of one as of the other? The British system comes pretty close to accepting the last suggestion. The American—except in communities large enough to support almost unique stations like WABF and WQXR in New York or, at least, large enough to make it worthwhile for some local outlet to carry the best of the network sustaining programs—comes pretty close to accepting the conclusion that if few want any music except jazz then no one should ever get anything else.

That solution becomes doubly unsatisfactory if one suspects that what might be called the balance of power is held by a group which does not, in any meaningful sense, know what it wants, and is subject to both the shrewdly calculated suggestion of those interested in exploiting certain forms of entertainment and to the effects of a mass auto-hypnosis as the result of which it likes what it has been convinced other people like. That the majority is amused by Bob Hope and thrilled by Frank Sinatra is obvious. But it is doubtful that it likes them quite as much as it thinks it does or, more especially, that it likes them as much more than similar rival performers as it seems to. Hero worship has taken strange forms in our time, but it is doubtful if it was ever more prevalent. To convince a certain large segment of the public that any man is popular is to make him so. What it actually gets from a performance by a celebrity is less important than the fact that it knows him to be one. "Names" and "personalities," no matter how synthetically created, have an appeal in and for themselves.

THAT democratic thinkers before our time were aware of the dangers which radio has made more acute is sufficiently illustrated by a quotation from John Stuart Mill which Mr. Siepmann has put at the head of one of his chapters. "Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant.—Men lose their higher aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying." If those sentences were inscribed over the desks of the officials in the broadcasting companies, those officials might suspect something which at present they at least refuse to admit, namely that the audience whose tastes they boast of satisfying is not something which they found but something which they created.

Even more discouraging than Mill's pronouncement is an unfortunate truth which Mr. Siepmann puts into his own words. "The drabness and poverty of most people's lives (or, if you will, their inability to amuse themselves) are such that even a mediocre service of broadcasting is to them an enrichment of their experience. We might say that listening to anything is for the average citizen anywhere better than not listening at all. Most people's inner resources of interest and amusement are meager and rapidly exhausted." He might have added that the less even the average person is thrown back upon such resources as he does have, the more meager they become, and that radio, along with other omnipresent sources of mediocre amusement, is probably producing a generation less capable of anything except passive absorption than any which ever existed before. It used to be objected that baseball and football were mere spectator sports. Today, any man who actually proceeds to a stadium to cheer at a game instead of taking it by radio or television may be classified as an athlete.

TOWARD the end of his book Mr. Siepmann devotes a chapter to the difficulties which have stood in the way of attempts either to use radio in the classroom or to broadcast educational programs over the public airways. I wish (and this is almost the only unfavorable criticism I have to make) that he had also raised clearly the fundamental question whether attempts to use radio and television within the framework of the educational system itself is not a mistake. The fact that students take to it proves no more than is proved by the fact that the general public takes to commercial broadcasting. Whatever advantages radio may have in the presentation of certain limited aspects of certain fields of knowledge these advantages may be more than counterbalanced by the further encouragement which its use gives to the growing refusal ever to do more than passively absorb what is offered in the easiest possible way. More things can be got from the printed page than can be got from the loudspeaker or the video tube, and unless the ability and the willingness to use the printed page are to be lost entirely, then it should remain, somewhere, the principle instrument of communication. The chief result of employing what educators call the audio-visual techniques might ultimately be the destruction of the ability to read.

I have already said that Mr. Siepmann obviously considers it no part of his purpose to suggest solutions or even to advocate one attitude rather than another. Perhaps that is just as well since it may very well be that ultimately and in any conclusive sense no solution is possible. A development is now under way of which the final consequences are not predictable and of which the causes are probably too powerful to be subject to more than a minor degree of control.

To say this is not to advocate simple *laissez faire* or to oppose thought and planning. It is merely to recognize that in the course of history forces sometimes emerge which are more powerful than any of the attempts to deal with them can very well be. Some of the unfortunate results of the Industrial Revolution might have been mitigated before they were, but the Industrial Revolution would, nevertheless, have had certain effects no matter what attempts had been made to direct it. We cannot, no matter how much we try, control all the consequences, good or bad, of the fact that there has appeared in our society an instrument of communication which can reach more people than were ever reached before and to which they will attend more readily than they were ever willing to attend to anything else.

THE VATICAN AND THE "JEWISH QUESTION"

The Record of the Hitler Period—and After

L. POLIAKOV

IT IS an indisputable fact that during the difficult years of the Nazi occupation, the Catholic faith in Europe gained new vigor. Today, after vying with Communism during the years of occupation as the focus of mass resistance against the invader, and sacrificing martyrs by the thousands, Catholicism is regarded by many as the strongest nucleus of resistance against the influence of the Communist myth.

One of the most important manifestations of the Catholic resistance against the Nazis was the effort to give assistance to the Jews, since persecution of Jews involved for the Church a question of principle—the inviolability of human life. (The matter presented itself differently for the Communists, who, mobilizing all their energies for the total struggle against the immediate enemy, were only moderately interested in the question of principle. Taken individually, they did many wonderful things: but human life *in se* remained for them a secondary issue.) Behind this question of principle, however, lay the whole complex problem of the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Judaism. Leaving out the Soviet Union, nearly 80 per cent of the European territory invaded by Germany was under the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome. And thus during the years of occupation the "Jewish question" in all its aspects was placed before the Catholic Church more sharply than it has been since the Middle Ages.

IN THE Middle Ages the role of the clergy was unrivaled in all phases of life. Spiritual and temporal power were inextricably linked together. Because all power in this world was considered as of divine origin, the Church was the source of political supremacy. But this forced the Church to take an active part in worldly struggles; violent conflicts developed between the Pope and the various national churches which were theoretically subordinate to him, and the situation was further complicated by the Pope's exercising temporal sovereign power over the "Church estates" in the center of Italy. The obsolete terms "Gallicanism" and "Josephism" recall the doctrines opposed to papal centralization which were developed in such powerful Catholic territories as France and the Austrian Empire.

The year 1870—when, with the unification of Italy, the papacy lost its temporal sovereignty—began a new stage. By progressive steps the ideological monopoly of the Church had come to an end. On the basis of the increasing secularization of the modern world, secular ideologies competed more and more with the ideology of the Church. This same fact, however, now strengthened the influence of the Vatican over the menaced national churches: by an instinctive movement of solidarity and self-protection, the internal bonds tightened. Even material

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EVENTS since 1933 have raised for the Catholic Church, with renewed sharpness, the question of Catholicism's attitude toward the Jews and the "Jewish problem," a question that has always been of great importance to Catholic theology and social doctrine. L. POLIAKOV here tries, factually and objectively, to describe and analyze the position of the Vatican in relation to the Jews in recent history. Mr. Poliakov, research director of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris, has published several volumes on the experience of the Jews under the Nazis, and continues to devote himself to the effort to understand the genesis and development of the catastrophe that befell Europe's Jews. Mr. Poliakov was born in Leningrad in 1910 and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Human Morality and the Nazi Terror" (August 1950). The present article was translated from the French by Rosa Mencher.

progress, by improving means of communication, facilitated the Vatican's control over the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the different countries of Europe and America. By a progressive centralization, the Pope began to exercise a more effective authority over the Church, an authority which some now describe as absolute (the papacy is the only monarchy that is both absolute and elective). But national particularities continue to oppose its centralizing absolutism. A French historian has written: "The Pontiff usually limits himself to confirming the prevailing general opinion, or, at least, to supporting an already powerful current of ideas, lest he be disobeyed."* The Pope's power is strictly moral, with all the limitations—but also all the profound significance—that the term implies.

Faced with the gradual de-Christianization of Europe during the past century, the Church has struggled obstinately to conserve its dominion over the human soul; though the source of the Vatican's authority is moral, no effort is neglected to buttress it by political means. The Pope concluded concordats with the governments of the leading Catholic countries in order to define the rights and field of action of the clergy, and in negotiating these concordats he naturally solicited the aid of those political parties which rested on Catholic support, wherever they existed. Thus the Vatican has been forced to come to terms with the modern world and even to make some doctrinal concessions. A long road has been traveled from the *Syllabus* of 1864 to the *Divine Redemptoris* of 1937; and in the final analysis, the personal talents and temperaments of the successive Popes have been determining factors in the cadence of this evolution.

IT IS well known that until a relatively recent time the Holy See regarded all liberal and democratic principles as essentially dangerous and malignant. It required the appearance of powerful totalitarian governments to bring about a change in this attitude and reveal suddenly the spiritual bonds that lay hidden beneath the apparently profound and irreconcilable differences between liberalism and Catholicism.

Certainly the Vatican demonstrated that it was cognizant of the tremendous danger represented by the dogmas of racist materialism. Pius XI, the courageous Pope who occupied the Holy See from 1922 to 1939, severely condemned Nazism and racism in his famous encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*† of 1937 and made his attitude clear by other symbolic and spectacular demonstrations, such as his departure from Rome at the time of Hitler's visit in May 1939—"The air here makes us sick!" Also, there can hardly be any question that the Vatican was aware of the German plan for instituting a Nazi papacy.‡

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* *La Papauté Contemporaine,* by Henri Marc-Bonnet (Paris, 1946).

†The following quotations may give an impression of the tenor of this encyclical:

"Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the state, or a particular form of state, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community . . . above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God: he is far from the true faith in God and from the concept of life which that faith upholds. . . .

"The bishops of the Church of Christ, 'ordained in the things that appertain to God' (Heb. 5:1), must watch that pernicious errors of this sort, and consequent practices more pernicious still, shall not gain a footing among their flock. . . ."

‡The conception of a Nazi theocracy headed by Adolf Hitler was revealed not long ago in the memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg, published in the magazine *Der Monat* of Berlin, in July 1949; and the internal attitude of leading Nazis towards the churches is shown clearly in the following extracts from a top-secret memorandum of June 1941 from Martin Bormann, head of the chancellory of the party, addressed to the Gauleiters and high dignitaries of the movement:

"The ideas of National Socialism and the ideas of Christianity are irreconcilable. The Christian churches are built on the ignorance of their believers, and strive in every way to maintain this ignorance, for only thus can they conserve their power. National Socialism on the other hand rests on *scientific* foundations. . . . When we National Socialists speak of faith in God we do not mean by this term, like the naive Christians and their ecclesiastical exploiters, a being in human form seated somewhere in the heavens. We must open the eyes of men and make them see that there exists in the universe, besides our insignificant little earth, an inconceivable number of other celestial bodies, bodies like the sun, and each one surrounded by planets which in their turn are sur-

What then led the present Pope, Pius XII, to adopt a less forthright policy than Pius XI? Was it the temperament of a "diplomatic" Pope succeeding a "militant" Pope? Was it an expectation that Hitler might defeat Moscow? Was it excessive prudence? Was it, finally, that supposed "Germanophilia" which was attributed to the Pope as early as 1917 when he was Monsignor Pacelli, papal legate at Munich? One can only guess; few secrets have been so well kept as those of the diplomacy of the Holy See.

The fact is, however, that during Hitler's lifetime the present Pope never clearly condemned the criminal policy of the Third Reich, and that the diplomatic relations between Berlin and the Vatican, although cold and reserved, remained correct. The Concordat of 1933 was never denounced, and it was not until June 2, 1945, one month after the defeat of Germany, that Pius XII found words strong enough to describe the "satanic specter of National Socialism." Such is the changing course of Vatican policy, which Pius XI in 1929 had defined thus: "When it is a matter of saving souls, we are brave enough to treat with the devil."

As for the Jews, the Holy See, always so well informed, must have been advised early of the fate the Nazis had reserved for them, the real meaning of the "final solution." From that time on, it was purely, as has been stated, a question of principle. The Vatican only remained faithful to its medieval tradition: if the medieval Popes were the originators of many anti-Jewish measures, such as the introduction of the Jewish badge (Fourth Lateran Council, 1215), they also affirmed many times during the course of the centuries that Jewish life was inviolable. According to the ideas of that time, the Jews, persecuted and humiliated as they were, served an essential function: they were the indispensable witnesses to the triumph of the Church, the truth of its faith, and the grandeur and reality of its dogmas. This papal policy was reaffirmed from 1939 to 1945, and the Vatican exerted itself to help the Jews by a thousand different means. Just the same, it is necessary to distinguish between public adoption of a general position condemning Nazism, and the varying character of the silent *de facto* interventions that actually took place in different countries.

To cite a few examples: Pius XII personally put thirty kilos of gold at the disposal of the Roman Jewish community in September 1943, when an exorbitant contribution was exacted from it by the Nazis. All through the nine months of the German occupation of Rome, some dozens of Roman Jews found shelter and protection in the buildings and offices of the Vatican. And this direct aid, accorded to the persecuted Jews by the Pope in his position as Bishop of Rome, was only the symbolic expression of an activity that spread throughout Europe, encouraging and stimulating the efforts of Catholic churches in almost every country. There is no doubt that secret instructions went out from the Vatican urging the national churches to intervene in favor of the Jews by every pos-

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rounded by moons. What we call the all-powerful, or God, is the natural force that makes all these bodies move in their orbits. The belief that this natural force is capable of concerning itself with the destiny of every individual being, of every little terrestrial bacillus, and that it could be influenced by prayers, and other nonsense of the sort, can rest only on a large dose of naivety or on a shameless commercialism. . . . In earlier generations, nations were guided by the Church. The power of the state was limited to issuing laws and ordinances; primarily, the state was an administrative body. Through the intervention of the clergy, the Church exercised the most enormous influence over the lives of individuals, or families, and of the collectivity. What did not suit the Church, it wiped out with unexampled brutality. . . . It lay with the Church to decide whether it would help the state or combat it; the state in fact was dependent upon it. That is why the German emperors' struggles against the Popes always failed. . . . Now for the first time in German history, it is the Fuehrer who holds the spiritual reins firmly in his hands. Through the party and its organs he has made himself—and thereby the German state—independent of the Church. All influences that may interfere with the national development which the Fuehrer with the help of the party has set in motion must be rooted out. The people must be progressively alienated from the churches and the clergy. Obviously, the churches will not fail to struggle against the loss of their power. But they must never recover the least influence over the national destiny. Their power must be broken forever. . . ."

sible means. Other communications of this sort were made directly to the civil authorities, as in Hungary and Slovakia. Judging by German diplomatic reports of the time, the cessation of deportations of Jews from Slovakia in the summer of 1942 (and consequently the survival of nearly 25 per cent of the Slovakian Jews) must be attributed to such pressures exerted on Monsignor Tiso, chief of the Slovakian puppet state. But, more generally, the different ways in which the instructions of the Holy See were followed in the East, in the South, and in the West, may perhaps give us an idea of the limits of the real power that the Vatican is able to exert over its dominion—that is, the degree of actual autonomy enjoyed by the national churches.

The admirable spirit which animated the churches of France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands, where acts of courage and devotion were innumerable (and should one day be engraved in a "Golden Book" of human solidarity), found in the East, and in Poland especially, only uncertain and isolated echoes. One finds in Poland no counterpart to the courageous protests that the Western cardinals and archbishops addressed to the occupying powers—unless we are to count as an exception one isolated sentence of Sapieha, Prince-Archbishop of Cracow, drawing the attention of the German governor-general, Hans Frank, to the moral corruption that the extermination of the Jews caused *among those who carried out the massacres:* "I shall not enlarge upon so dreadful a fact as the employment of the inebriated youth of the labor service for the extermination of the Jews. . . ." (This terribly ambiguous sentence occurs in a protest addressed to Frank on November 8, 1942.) A similar disproportion is revealed if we compare Catholic activities in the East and West in rescuing victims, arranging for false documents and escape channels, concealing Jews in the convents, rescuing children, etc.

It would carry us too far to analyze the various reasons for this profound contrast, though it may be mentioned that the most important was probably the difference in the general common attitude towards the Jews in the East and the West. It should be pointed out, moreover, that the desire to make converts played only the smallest role in promoting Catholic activity on behalf of the Jews—contrary to rumors that have been rather lightmindedly circulated. It is true, of course, that converts were made, but it would be the grossest injustice to claim that conversion was the clergy's principal goal.

Turning now to the sphere of public protests and principled condemnations, it must be said that nothing similar to certain statements of Pius XI (let us recall his famous words: "We are all Semites spiritually. . . .") was said at Rome under the pontificate of Pius XII. If, as has been pointed out, there were some resounding protests made with the Vatican's approval on the local level, the Pope did not consider it wise to add to these protests the authority of his own voice; or if he did make a public statement, it was with such caution that his words had no effect, or were misunderstood.

A characteristic example may be found in the successive reports sent to Berlin in October 1943 by Ernest von Weizsäcker, German ambassador to the Vatican. It was the month when, after the fall of the ephemeral regime of Badoglio, the Germans took over the occupation of the Holy City. On October 16 the SS began to round up the Jews of Rome. Bishop Hudal, rector of the German Catholic Church in Rome, asked the German military command to order the end of these arrests, both in Rome and in the suburbs: "Otherwise, it is to be feared that the Pope might publicly take a position against these arrests, which would lend support to enemy propaganda. . . ." Weizsäcker reported Hudal's request to Berlin, adding: "I am in a position to confirm the reaction of the Vatican to the deportation of the Jews from Rome. . . . It is said that the bishops of French cities where similar events occurred took a very definite stand. The Pope, as supreme leader of the Church and Bishop of Rome, could hardly show himself less zealous than they, more especially since there are many who are ready to compare the present Pope unfavorably with his more temperamental predecessor. Enemy propaganda will undoubtedly seize upon this incident to disturb our peaceful relations with the Curia. . . ."

This was written October 17, 1943. Eleven days later, Weizsäcker sings an entirely different tune: "Although pressed from all sides, the Pope has not let himself be persuaded to make any public protest against the deportation of the Roman Jews. . . . He has done everything in this delicate matter to avoid straining his relations with the German government. . . . A communiqué published by *l'Osservatore Romano* and written in the style peculiar to the Vatican—that is to say, a style tortuous and vague—declares that the Pope blesses all men, without distinction of nationality, race, or religion, with his paternal solicitude. . . . There is all the less objection to be raised against the terms of this message, in that very few will recognize in it a special allusion to the Jewish question."

ONE may still argue in this case, or in similar cases, that public protests would have brought no help to the victims, and might even have produced contrary effects. There was, for example, the tragic story of the converted Jews of Holland, where in July 1942, by mutual agreement, the Protestant and Catholic churches planned to make a public protest against the deportations. As a result of German threats, the Protestant churches at the last moment refrained from reading the message, whereas the Catholic churches went through with the plan. Consequently, the Jews who had converted to Catholicism were arrested and deported, whereas the Protestant converts remained in Holland. It is painful to have to state that at the time when gas chambers and crematoria were operating day and night, the high spiritual authority of the Vatican did not find it necessary to make a clear and solemn protest that would have echoed through the world; and yet one cannot say that there may not have been pertinent and valid reasons for this silence.

On November 29, 1949, Pius XII received in special audience a group of seventy Jewish refugees, former inmates of concentration camps. "Your presence here," the Holy Father said, "stands as witness of the gratitude of the many men and women who, in perilous times for them, and often under the menace of imminent death, learned by their own experience how the Catholic Church and her true disciples, in the exercise of charity, know how to raise themselves above all the narrow and arbitrary limits created by human egoism and racial passions."

The examples that have been given show how much these words were justified. No statistics will ever tell us how many lives were saved by the Church; in any case, it is certain that a great many of the Jewish survivors of the Nazi occupation benefited from its aid at some moment in their odyssey. Many traces of this courageous activity remain, and certain Judeo-Christian associations—notably, the Amitiés Chrétiennes of France—perpetuate the spirit of those days of heroic solidarity. The associations constitute a new development in Europe: for the first time points of view are freely exchanged between men who emphasize elements that unify them rather than keep them apart.

WE HAVE spoken so far of the attitude of the Vatican towards what will go down in history under the Nazi euphemism of "the final solution of the Jewish question"—that is, extermination. But the troubled period of the Nazi occupation permits us also to clarify another aspect of the attitude of the Vatican today towards Judaism and the Jews.

The "final solution" was only the end result of a mass of discriminatory and restrictive measures carried out step by step by the Nazis. These preliminary measures were enthusiastically welcomed and imitated by the various Quisling regimes that multiplied under the German aegis. (When it came to the "final solution" itself, those regimes were more backward.) Deprivation of civil rights, economic restrictions, *numerus clausus,* the wearing of the Jewish insignia—all these discriminatory actions corresponded to measures that had been encouraged by the medieval Church on the basis of those ideas about the role of the Jews which we have already discussed. In the course of the 19th century these discriminations seemed to have disappeared; but now they were revived, and by an ideology that in its essence was as anti-Christian as it was anti-Semitic. A serious question thus presented itself: what attitude would be taken by the Vatican? Had there been any change in the ideas of the papacy in this sphere? Through an indirect approach made possible by the opening of the archives of the Vichy regime, I shall attempt, as objectively as possible, to throw some light on this important question.

The strongly Catholic government of Marshal Pétain, having promulgated a group of regulations concerning Jews known as the "Statut des Juifs" (June 1941), and planning to enact further measures of the same sort, was anxious to be informed as fully as possible about the attitude of the Holy See. Pétain instructed Léon Bérard, French ambassador to the Vatican, to make the necessary inquiries, and in August 1941 Bérard reported that nothing had been said to him at the Vatican "which might be interpreted as criticism or disapproval by the Pope of the legislative and regulatory acts in question." Continuing his inquiries, the ambassador a few days later sent to Vichy a very detailed and careful summary of "the position of the Holy See in regard to the Jewish problem."

This report is divided into several parts; in the first part, entitled "The Church and Racism," Bérard points out what we have already noted: that "there is a basic and irreconcilable opposition between racist theories and the doctrines of the Church.'" Having given the reasons for this, he concludes: "However, the teachings of the Church on the subject of racist ideas do not by a great deal permit us to deduce that it necessarily condemns every specific measure taken by any state against what is called the Jewish race." But it is the second part of Bérard's report—entitled "The Church, the Jewish Problem, and Anti-Semitism"—which is by far the most interesting.

The importance of this section of Bérard's report is so great that I shall quote it *in extenso:* "One seeks in vain in the canon law, in theology, and in the papal edicts any clear set of precepts that could be regarded as a system of laws covering Judaism and the Jewish religion. Indeed, it is not easy to find any well-defined body of doctrine on this matter at all.

"The principle that appears first, and is most definite, is that in the eyes of the Church a Jew who has been validly baptized ceases to be a Jew and disappears into the 'flock of Christ.' At the same time, one should not too hastily conclude that religion is for the Church the only element that distinguishes Israel from other nations. The Church does not at all consider the Jews a mere 'spiritual family' such as is composed, for example, by the Catholics or the 'reformed' Christians among us. It recognizes that among the distinctive features of the Jewish community there are certain peculiarities, not *racial,* but *ethnic.* The Church has recognized this fact for a long time, and has always taken it into consideration.

"We know by history that the Church has often protected Jews against the violence and injustice of their persecutors, and that at the same time it has relegated them to the ghettos. One of the greatest of churchmen, St. Thomas Aquinas, has left teachings that cast light on this attitude. St. Thomas deals with the Jewish problem—incidentally, but in very clear terms—in *Summa Theologica,* IIa, IIae, Q. 10, Art. 9, 10, 11, and 12. The following is a résumé of his doctrine: The Jews must be tolerated in the exercise of their religion; they must be protected from religious coercion; their children must not be baptized by force without the consent of their parents. On the other hand, while proscribing any policy of oppression of the Jews, St. Thomas nevertheless recommends that suitable measures be taken to limit their activities and restrict their influence. It would be unreasonable in a Christian state to allow the Jews to participate in the government and thus subject Catholics to their authority. It follows from this that *it is legitimate to forbid them access to public office, and it is also legitimate to admit them into the universities and the liberal professions only on the basis of a fixed proportion (numerus clausus).*

"As a matter of fact, this practice was strictly adhered to during the Middle Ages, and to that end a Lateran Council prescribed that Jews should distinguish themselves from Christians by *a peculiarity of dress.*

"On the basis of this summary, we should now be in a position to decide whether the Statut des Juifs promulgated by the French government is or is not in conflict with Catholic principles, and in which particular points it might be in conflict. But this interpretation will be facilitated if we examine first the reactions of the Holy See to the regulations concerning Jews which were put into effect by the Fascist state about three years ago."

THE section that follows—"Difficulties between the Holy See and Italy in Regard to the Fascist Legislation concerning Jews" —is less interesting from our point of view. Bérard mentions the Vatican's opposition to the prohibition of marriages between converted Jews and "Aryans," and adds: "We need fear no differences of opinion of this kind, since the French law concerning the Jews contains no stipulation comparable to the one that caused the difficulties between the papal authority and the Italian government." In the conclusion of his report, Bérard reassures the Marshal once more: "As someone in authority at the Vatican has told me, they do not intend to pick a quarrel with us over the Statut des Juifs. However, two wishes have been expressed to me by the representatives of the Holy See, with the obvious desire that they be submitted to the Chief of State:

"(1) That no stipulations concerning marriage be added to the law on the Jews. It is on this point that we would run into difficulties of a religious nature. The Vatican was greatly disturbed when Rumania adopted on this capital point certain rules of law borrowed from Fascist legislation.

"(2) That precepts of justice and charity be taken into account in the application of the law. Here my interlocutors seemed especially concerned about 'the liquidation of business in which Jews own interests.'"

So much for the Bérard document. Published two years ago in the French press (*Le Monde Juif, L'Ordre,* etc.), it has brought forth no denial nor stimulated any comment. The reader will understand if, after discussing in these pages the glorious record of the Catholic Church in its efforts to save Jewish lives from the Nazi murderers, I too prefer to add no comment.

THE war once ended, the Jewish problem in Europe lost some of that acuteness which I have tried to describe, and its main focus shifted to Palestine. The analysis presented above may perhaps have prepared us to grasp certain aspects of the policies pursued by the Vatican in Palestinian matters.

During the heroic period of the Balfour Declaration, the apostles of Zionism were already trying to win the support of the Holy See, and an audience granted to the Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow in 1917 by Pope Benedict XIV seemed a promising sign. But in 1922, when the British Mandate with its "national home" came before the Council of the League of Nations for ratification, the Zionists became aware that they could not count on any effective support from the Vatican. The president of the Council of the League, Quinones de Leon, was a Spaniard, and the unanimous agreement of the members of the Council, which included the representatives of Brazil, France, Belgium, and Italy, was indispensable to ratification. Only through the untiring exertions of Chaim Weizmann, who appealed to De Leon's sense of honor by evoking the tragedy of Spanish Judaism, was a favorable decision obtained. "The sacrifices of the martyrs of the Spanish Inquisition bore fruit four hundred years later," Weizmann said afterwards.

During the years that followed, when the destiny of Palestine became an element of British imperial policy, and the conflict between Jews and Arabs had in appearance been circumscribed, one finds no hint of the adoption of a position by the Vatican—which, as we know, often carries its policy of prudence and discretion to extremes.

After the great catastrophe that befell European Jewry, and the many tragic events still so vivid in all our memories, Great Britain renounced the Mandate, and at the beginning of 1947 the Palestine question was placed in the hands of the United Nations, almost half whose members (twenty-seven out of fifty-seven) were Catholic countries or countries with Catholic majorities. The United Nations appointed a commission of inquiry, which in the fall of 1947 proposed a plan for the partition of Palestine, including as one of its provisions the internationalization of Jerusalem—that is to say, the creation of an enclave including the Holy City and its environs that would be administered by an international authority. At the time, the representatives of Israel supported this plan, which the Arab delegations unanimously rejected. That the Catholic Church should adopt an attitude of absolute neutrality in a conflict between Jews and Arabs, and that of all possible solutions the Church should prefer one that would assure the internationalization of the Holy Places, putting them in the hands of an authority in which the Catholic position would be largely represented—nothing could have appeared more logical. But the Vatican still refrained from any indication of its views.

It was only after the United Nations had proved powerless to impose its solution upon the parties concerned, and when blood had begun to flow in the Holy Land, that the Pope let his voice be heard. Two weeks before the expiration of the Mandate and the proclamation of the State of Israel, the Pope issued his encyclical *Auspicia Quaedam* (May 1948), in which he wrote:

"We mean to refer to the Holy Places of Palestine, which have long been disturbed.

"Indeed, if there exists any place that ought to be most dear to every cultured person, surely it is Palestine, where, from the dawn of antiquity, such great light of truth shone for all men. . . .

"We desire, therefore, Venerable Brethren, that supplications be poured forth to the Most Holy Virgin for this request: that the situation in Palestine may at long last be settled justly and thereby concord and peace be also happily established."

At the moment when this encyclical was published, the Arab armies were preparing to take the offensive and the cause of Israel appeared greatly in jeopardy. But one does not find in this text any precise indication of the status that the Pope considered desirable for the Holy Places—most of which, we should remember, are in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In the weeks that followed events moved fast. The Old City fell into the hands of the Transjordanian Legion. The New City—the specifically Jewish section—was encircled and cut off from the rest of the country, and its fate appeared more and more in doubt. Count Bernadotte, the mediator appointed by the United Nations, undertook negotiations for a compromise, as a result of which he published his proposals of June 27, envisioning in Paragraph III* the inclusion of Jerusalem in the territory to be given to the Arabs. But the possibility thus raised that the Holy City might become an Arab city brought forth no reaction from the Vatican.

The Vatican made a clear statement of its position only after the situation had been completely reversed, following the campaign in the Negev, the break-through at Latrun, and the raising of the siege of Jerusalem, when the fortunes of war seemed to have turned definitely toward the Jewish side.

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*The text of Paragraph III of Bernadotte's proposal is as follows: "Inclusion of the city of Jerusalem in Arab territory with municipal autonomy for the Jewish community and special arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places." (As for the last point, the proposal of special protection for the Holy Places was to be made again by the Israeli delegation at the United Nations eighteen months later.)

Then on October 24, 1948, the Pope issued a second encyclical, *In Multiplicibus*:

". . . It would be expedient, as a better guarantee for the safety of the sanctuaries under the present circumstances, to give an international character to Jerusalem and its vicinity, where so many and so precious reminders of the life and death of our Savior are to be found.

"It is also necessary to assure with international guarantees both the right of free access to the Holy Places scattered throughout Palestine and the freedom of religion and the respect for customs and religious traditions."

This exhortation was renewed and further particularized several months later (April 15, 1949) in the encyclical *In Redemptoris Nostri:*

"We cannot help repeating here the same declaration, encouraged by the thought that it may also serve as an inspiration to Our children.

"Let them, wherever they are living, use every legitimate means to persuade the rulers of nations, and those whose duty it is to settle this important question, to accord to Jerusalem and its surroundings a juridical status. . . .

"Nor can We omit to point out that all rights to the Holy Places which Catholics during many centuries have acquired and time and again defended valiantly and which Our Predecessors have solemnly and effectively vindicated should be preserved inviolate."

IT IS significant that the official bulletin of French Catholicism, *Documentation Catholique*—a publication usually objective and measured in tone, and which many times, especially since the war, has reminded its readers of the papal declarations and encyclicals condemning race hatred and anti-Semitism—thought it appropriate to follow the publication of the encyclical *In Redemptoris Nostri* by an "appeal" entitled "Christianity Faces the Palestinian Drama." This was sent out by the Catholic news agency Fides, and amounted, it must be said, to nothing less than an exhortation to aggressive anti-Semitism. The "appeal" may be judged by the following quotations:

". . . Although the orthodox [Jews] adhere to Zionism while identifying the person of the Messiah with the whole body of the Jewish people, a Hebrew elite is being created in the *kibbutzim,* where under a collectivist materialism that rivals the achievements of the Communists, they are 'breeding' and educating a new race. Amid Semitic disorder and the arrogant exultation of triumphant vengeance, shock troops and assassins without scruple are being created. . . .

"We who, after having been systematically blinded and deceived for many months, have been able at least in part, through careful inquiry, to get at the truth of events in Palestine, can only subscribe to a belief that has already been frequently expressed: 'Zionism is a new Nazism.' . . .

"Only firm and determined opposition can awaken Israel from its delirium and permit the establishment of tolerant mutual relations. To our mind it is but Christian charity to bind the lunatic in his rage."

I shall mention here only in passing that, contrary to the insinuations of this article, perfectly satisfactory cooperation had in the meantime been established among all the various and numerous Christian establishments in the Holy Land, as is testified by various declarations made on the scene by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox ecclesiastics.

Let me add that another number of this same *Documentation Catholique* contains the following very judicious statements from the pen of Father Paul Demann: ". . . But how can one speak of the Jewish problem in 1948 without speaking of Palestine? How can one remain indifferent to the unhappy events in the Holy Land? And from another point of view, an attitude taken for or against the State of Israel must have a fatal and obvious effect on the attitude taken towards the Jews in general." (July 17, 1949.)

IN AN Apostolic Exhortation of November 10, 1949, addressed to the bishops and faithful of the world on the eve of the Plenary Session of the United Nations, Pius XII again took up the question of the Holy Places: "... Today, while the future status of Palestine is being discussed in public assembly, We, in keeping with the duty of Our Apostolic Office, urgently appeal to all who glory in the name of Christian to unite with us in more fervent prayer so as to obtain from Almighty God gifts of peace, love, and justice for those Holy Places. . . ."

Is it permissible to suggest that certain steps—more definite but also more discreet—were undertaken by the Vatican at the same time? The General Assembly of the United Nations took up the question on December 9. There is an echo of the Holy See's influence on its decision in the public statement of Dr. Rudolph Munoz, the Argentinian delegate: "Our feeling on that aspect of the problem is the same as that which guided other Latin American countries, and we cannot in any respect disregard the dictates of our religious spirit."

The result of the vote on this issue took no account either of the opinion of the Conciliation Committee (United States, France, Turkey), which had delivered its report shortly before the meeting of the General Assembly, or of the last proposals of Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, who had suggested the creation of an international authority whose sphere of activity would be limited to the actual sanctuaries of the three religions concerned. The Assembly voted thirty-eight to fourteen (United States and Great Britain opposing), with seven abstentions, for the internationalization of Jerusalem and its environs, which were to become a *corpus separatum* administered by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The thirty-eight votes in favor of the plan included ten Moslem countries and nineteen Catholic, plus the Soviet bloc, which for obvious reasons favored a plan of internationalization that would offer the Soviet Union new possibilities of penetration into the Middle East.

The task of drawing up a statute in conformity with this decision was left to the Trusteeship Council, which in April 1950 approved a plan that in its general outline held to the old proposals of the United Nations Inquiry Commission of 1947.

It will be recalled that those proposals were formulated as temporary solutions during a period of conflict, at a time when the termination of the British Mandate had created a situation of disorder and confusion, and that they were based essentially on a projected establishment of frontiers that would have made Jerusalem an enclave within Arab territory. But now, when the situation has been stabilized as a result of the dramatic struggles so sharp in our memories, and when there is no longer any interruption of territorial continuity between Jewish Jerusalem and the rest of the territory of Israel, such proposals make no sense economically, politically, or juridically, attempting as they do to wrest from a sovereign state belonging to the UN an essential part of its territory. It is obvious that the Israeli citizens of Jerusalem will never consent to give up their dearly purchased nationality and their political rights in order to become the subjects of a territory under international administration. Equally inevitable is the opposition of Transjordan, which has absorbed the territory of the Old City. Is the UN to mobilize an international army in order to impose its plan by force?

In the face of this impasse, the General Assembly of the UN, which has the task of reaching a final decision, has shown no anxiety to settle the question, which during the session of last June was postponed until the session of this fall. The new proposals of the government of Israel, repeating the suggestion of limiting international control to the Holy Places alone and guaranteeing their safety and free access to them, as well as protecting the rights of the various religious communities of Jerusalem, appear to constitute the soundest solution and the only practical one.

The Vatican nevertheless maintains its position unchanged, as may be seen from an article published in *l'Osservatore Romano* of September 15 last. This article states very clearly that there has been no change in the aims of the Catholic Church as they have been defined by papal encyclicals and pontifical exhortations, and that only "a *corpus separatum* under firm international administration would guarantee security." In passing, the article discharges a few arrows on the subject of "the news from diverse sources (but originating in general from South American capitals in the wake of a Jewish mission) diffusing the rosiest hopes. . . . It would appear [to judge from these reports] that all obstacles have been smoothed out and that Catholics no longer have any cause for concern." These remarks apparently refer to the plan presented by the government of Israel. The article concludes: "We do not know what the next session of the Assembly will or will not do, but we know that for Catholics, the only possible solution of the problem of the Holy Places would be their being placed under international administration in accordance with the conditions set forth by His Holiness Pius XII."

THERE is room, perhaps, to inquire whether the two different aspects of the traditional and dogmatically unchangeable attitude of the Holy See towards the Jews, as seen in the light of the analysis and the quotations presented in this article, are not in their profound essence incompatible, producing in practice real contradictions. Let us conclude with one example relating to an important question of current concern.

No one any longer doubts that among the many factors that make up, to borrow a phrase of the Holy Office, "that form of hatred which is called anti-Semitism,"* a considerable role is played by certain unconscious sentiments, certain impressions surviving from childhood. Now, among the experiences of the Catholic child is a prayer that is repeated by all Catholics on Good Friday, in which "perfidious Jews" and "Jewish perfidy" are referred to. The Latin text says *perfidi Judaei.* Philologists and Latinists know that, in spite of their apparent similarity, the Latin word *perfidius,* unlike the English word "perfidious," means simply infidel, without faith, referring to those who refuse to accept the Christian faith. (This fact has been recently confirmed by such specialists as E. Peterson [*Ephemerides Liturgicae,* 1936] and J. Oesterreicher [*Theological Studies,* 1947].) One may imagine the large and unfortunate influence that this linguistic confusion can exercise over the feelings of hundreds of millions of Catholics.

Certain efforts were made during the past few years—efforts in which such organizations as the International Association of Christians and Jews and Les Amitiés Chrétiennes participated, and with which Catholic personages of high rank associated themselves—to obtain a decision on the interpretation of these passages in the Good Friday prayer from the highest competent authority, the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The following is the statement given by the Sacred Congregation (June 10, 1948):

"In the two prayers by which the Holy Mother Church in the course of the solemn prayers of Good Friday implores the mercy of God for the Hebrew people also, there occur the words *perfidi Judaei* and *judaica perfidia.* The question has been raised: what is the exact sense of these Latin expressions, especially since in various translations of the prayers into modern languages used by the faithful these words have been rendered by expressions that have appeared offensive to the said people.

"The Sacred Congregation, consulted on this matter, finds it necessary only to say the following:

"In translations into modern languages, expressions meaning 'infidelity' and 'infidel in matters of faith' are not objectionable." (*"Sacra haec Congregatio, de re interrogata, haec tantum declarare censuit: Non improbari, in translationibus in linguas vulgares, locutiones quarum sensus sit: Infidelitas, infideles in credendo."*)

Here again, one must perforce abstain from any personal judgment as to the practical effect of a decision formulated in such terms.

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*Decree of the Holy Office, March 25, 1928.

MALCAH AND SEDGEWICK

A Story

MARK RAVEN

OUR world narrows around us as we grow older, and so it should not have seemed so startling to receive on one day the news of Malcah's violent death in Palestine and a letter from my old Headmaster Sedgewick, old, but active still as Dean of Brimpton Cathedral in England.

Their paths had all but crossed in life; now at last they had met. Malcah was shot by a British gun, as one of a group of terrorists rounding up some stray British soldiers as hostages. And on this day, or close to it, Sedgewick, distilling all the world's wisdom and kindliness in his book-lined study overlooking the Cathedral Close, had written to me across the waste of years to express his deep misery at the fight between the British and the Jews in Palestine.

"The more violent and criminal the terrorists become," he wrote, "the more sure I am that at some point the British have taken the wrong road morally in Palestine. I am horror-stricken at the things your people are doing there, and I support everything we are doing to repress the terrorists. Yet I know in my heart—I must as a Christian—that a story of Jewish bloodshed and suffering in Palestine can never be some accident of history. It is too close to another story of suffering that has eternal meaning for me. I have tried to read the meaning of the Jewish story so often, but I can never know if I have the answer. . . ."

Such, in effect, was Malcah's obituary. She would not have liked it.

I put the letter in my pocket, carrying it and the thought of Malcah with me as I walked in the bleak wintry air along Riverside Drive. In the stolid, well-clad figures around me, so many coming from Malcah's own past, I felt a quality of soft comfort hard to relate to her, and harder still to link in spirit to the rich asceticism of the Cathedral Close. Perhaps one day it would all fall into pattern, just as today it was no longer difficult to explain Malcah to Sedgewick. In Florence twenty years ago it had been unthinkable.

I WAS eighteen, and working hard at Lydford Grammar School for the scholarship that would take me to Oxford, when Sedgewick had sprung his surprise. By day, I was an English schoolboy, my mind open to every breath of wind from English life and history. By night, and for a large part of every weekend, I was as shut off from England as any *yeshiva bochur*. With nine other Jewish boys, I lived in a little Jewish "college," a training school for the rabbinate; and for many weary hours after school we would sit around a large table under the brooding gaze of our massively bearded teacher Rabbi Taub, puzzling our way, with the help of Rashi and Tosefoth, through the obscurities of the Talmud.

But even Tubby looked with veneration on the word *Oxford*, and during this special period I had been relieved of all Hebrew studies in order to bend my energies towards the coming examination.

Sedgewick was my guardian angel through all this, setting me themes himself for essays which I read to him long after the other boys had left school, or passing me on to his wife for coaching in economics and history. Tubby liked this too, that the Headmaster—and especially one who was a clergyman of the

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Church of England—should show such favor to one of the "college boys." But Tubby did not understand that I loved Sedgewick not so much for the lessons he gave me as for the bubbling jollity that he brought to everything, the clean-shaven parson's face dissolving into the schoolboy's grin, his eyes twinkling with fun when they were not filmed with a far-off mystic look.

Term was nearly over, and five weeks of Christmas vacation lay ahead, in which I was to keep my mind on nothing but my books. On this raw December morning, Sedgewick had just come out of prayers, and seeing me standing in the quad, threw his arm around my shoulder, steered me towards his study, and, as if the whole thing was quite spontaneous and unimportant, said:

"Mrs. Sedgewick and I are going to Florence next Monday for five weeks. We go every year for the Christmas vacation. Would you like to come with us as our guest? It would be such fun to be there together."

Nothing since in my whole life has given me, or ever could give me, such a sense of ecstatic and bounding wonder. Sedgewick's words, quiet, almost careless, were like the opening statement of a fugue, a remark simple in itself that is destined to release a mighty flood of action and counteraction, a tumbling cataract of sound and beauty, before it achieves again the triumphant simplicity of completion. For me, all that went on in the next six days had just this feeling of crescendous excitement. For three days, Tubby and my school friends buzzed around me, echoing my own happiness and wonder. It was with a sense of almost uninterrupted movement from that first word with Sedgewick that we finished at school, swung into the train at London, buffeted our way across the Channel, touched a starry Paris at night with a kiss of welcome and farewell, and were heady with the frosty air of the Vosges and Alps. Breakfast at Basel, Domodossola behind us, and we were sweeping down to Bologna and Florence. *Rallentando*—and then the final triumphant single note ending the fugue, in a sound that died away in silence. I stood at the window of my own room in our hotel on the Lungarno, overlooking the Ponte Vecchio. I stood there for a long time alone. It was the first time that I had ever felt with any personal intimacy the still silence of the centuries.

It was, of course, this silence that Sedgewick wanted me to hear above the chatter of the school room and the clatter of the textbooks. We were to go on as before with our meticulous studies, with names and authorities and dates, but only as background to a calm and unhurried intimacy with the golden mood of that ageless city. We were still the Headmaster and the favored pupil, yet there was something deeper in our relationship that even now I cannot define. I sensed, of course, behind the exquisite generosity of Sedgewick's act, his own happiness at being able to re-live, through me, his own first rapture; but I felt also that since we were Christian and Jew in no passive sense, our relationship was enriched by some interplay of these two experiences. It was an equal interchange; there was never argument or pressure. But was there not, in Sedgewick's sweetness and understanding, a gentle assertion of the all-embracing truth and charity of Christianity?

It opened a strange world, buried as I had been in my books, to see reflected in Sedgewick's face the joyful holiness of a Fra Angelico, or to share with him, as we crossed the Piazza del Duomo, the unearthly lightness of the Campanile. A feeling of this kind was new to me, and I surrendered myself to it almost completely. Almost, but not wholly. Sometimes, as I trod the galleries or wandered through an incense-laden church to search out some primitive frescoes, I found myself full of my own thoughts, herding much of my new experience into a box labeled "Life among the Goyim." How ruefully I look back now to those days, wondering who was fooling whom, and doubting now, as I hold his letter in my hand and think of Malcah, whether I shall ever find the thread that will guide me to the heart of the maze.

WE SAT—Sedgewick, his wife, and I—at our table in the corner of the dining room at the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Florence, the Headmaster, with the wine list before him, beaming with beneficence at all the world as he prepared to announce his decision. He squinted at me over the top of his glasses, and pressed the tips of his fingers together in prayerful cheerfulness.

"A bottle of Orvieto I think, eh? We must begin to break away from Chianti. I wager that Horace drank Orvieto, and Horace knew. *Nunc est bibendum. . . .*"

"Nunc pede libero pulsanda tellus," I concluded dutifully.

"Ah, yes." His happiness was complete. "What a day it has been. That glorious Lippi." He was quiet for a moment. "And tomorrow, dear," turning to his wife, "Santa Croce again, eh, while Mark goes to synagogue?"

He lingered lovingly over the name *Santa Croce,* and I sensed the moment of holiness that would seize them the next day as they walked by the crude black and white marble of the façade into the cold majesty of the interior. We had been there once together some days earlier. Now once again they would breathe in the spirit of those high-sprung arches, and move slowly across the softly red floor towards the Giotto frescoes in the Bardi Chapel. Later they would come back into the Piazza—eyes averted from the horrid Dante statue (modern)—to go into the Cloisters, the first, by Arnolfo, to be smiled at tolerantly as a little too ornate, the second—the Brunelleschi—to be greeted with a gentle sigh of welcome.

In the beatific silence, the waiter returned and the Headmaster poured out the Orvieto. It seemed like a libation, a sort of *kiddush.*

It was Friday night, of course, that made it into *kiddush.* Back at the "college," old Tubby would be making a libation too, of rosy Carmel wine, and without benefit of Horace. At supper they would look at my empty place, and wonder, as I still did, how it had happened to me. I had had a letter that day from my closest friend there, Arthur, pleasantly evocative of the "college" and schoolboydom:

"We all went to the Goldberg wedding on Tuesday night," Arthur wrote. "There was dancing and any amount of champagne until 2 AM. Tubby generously turned a blind eye. It was all rather vulgar and most enjoyable.

"Life goes on here, as you see, the same as ever, and we can't yet determine whether it's we who are real and your journey that is fantasy, or vice versa. I strongly suspect that it is the latter, and that you have entered the real world, leaving us still buried in the cobwebs of make-believe. Sometimes I find myself asking the same kind of question at school, when we, gathered from the four corners of Minsk, Pinsk, and Brest Litovsk, bend our minds—and not unsuccessfully—to the study of our great English heritage, breathing the air that Shakespeare breathed, and calling for courage on the spirit of Drake, Nelson, and Kitchener. But 'who fished the Midrash up? What porridge had Ibn Ezra?' "

I wrote a short note back to Arthur that night, saying cryptically that I would have much to tell him when I got back. He should remind me, I said, to tell him about a dark lady of the sonnets who had crossed my path.

"As for my being here," I wrote, "I think your first hypothesis is more correct. No one could call this a real world. Try and visualize Dante sitting in the Piazza, as he did, watching Giotto build the Duomo. Or think of this. When the city fathers were undecided where to put Michelangelo's 'David,' they set up a committee to consider the question, the members being—now hold your breath—Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, Filippino Lippi, Andrea della Robbia, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci. Does this seem real?"

A DAILY ration of letter writing was part of our usual routine before we settled down after dinner, in our corner of the hotel's vast drawing room, to evening reading. Mrs. Sedgewick usually began her evening with that part of Baedeker—in Italian—which covered the next day's activity, followed by a mighty government blue book that she was working through—*The Report of the Balfour Committee on Industry and Trade.* The Headmaster was re-reading Vasari—in Italian—gurgling with pleasure every so often, until, at a later stage of the evening, he would lay it aside and pick up a gray-covered book of devotion that he had brought with him. *My* book, gently but firmly assigned to me from the first evening, was Creighton's *History of the Papacy;* but as I settled down to it each night, pursuing in particular the remarkable history of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, I would try desperately to put off the effort of absorption, reluctant to leave the bright, exciting world around me.

In the drawing room itself, odd groups of diners would still be chattering away over their liqueurs, mostly English it seemed, but occasionally exotic-looking Latins, the women highly made up, the men full of exaggerated mannerisms of politeness, helping the women most fulsomely into their cloaks, or even kissing their hands in greeting. From outside, I would hear the pulse-quickening music of a foreign city, cafés, bars, the Opera, a world of freedom and life.

I would open my book slowly, lingering over the elaborate title page: *A History of the Papacy From the Time of the Great Schism to the Sack of Rome, In Six Volumes, By Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London, 1901;* or I would turn in pleasant revery to the end pages where, according to the formula of a more leisurely age, the publishers had printed their full current catalog. It was so easy to let one's mind wander among those charmingly encrusted titles—books in the Badminton Library of Sports, edited by His Grace the Duke of Beaufort, books in the Fur, Feather, and Fin Series, books of travel and adventure in the Colonies—*With Rifle and Hound in Ceylon*—books of military adventure—*London to Ladysmith via Pretoria,* by Winston S. Churchill. . . .

But I would feel Sedgewick's eye on me, and would plunge again into the meteoric career of my hero Aeneas Sylvius, the man-about-town who became Pope Pius III. Even here, my mind would wander, awakening to the new world around me. What did it take to produce a distinguished churchman, I asked myself, thinking of Sedgewick's saintly poise. Aeneas Sylvius, I knew from Creighton, had had many a carefree adventure before he entered the Church. "His private life was profligate enough," I read, "but in 1446 he resolved to live more cleanly, 'to abandon,' as he said, 'Venus for Bacchus.' " How had this charming world, so full of zest and the essence of living, been shrouded in the cold wrappers of the Reformation? What had impelled Creighton, a Protestant, to devote himself to it, writing long into the night in his no doubt bleak and draughty vicarage in Northumberland? And Sedgewick, coming back every year from his grubby schoolboys to the idyllic infants of Della Robbia and the earthy peasants of Masaccio's "Holy Family," did he too feel, as I did, that the fountain of life had ceased to flow freely in our cold, industrious climate, when man no longer made man in God's image?

I was beginning slowly and unsurely to find my way around the period, but there was a secret of taste, some canon of purity, which I realized I had not yet discovered. Andrea del Sarto was one test. One had to find his work "too slick," "insincere," though it looked beautiful enough to me. Cellini was another. One might read the *Memoirs* for fun, admire the "Perseus" as tremendously able, but essentially one had to recognize Cellini as a second-rater, a boaster, and a scalawag. But what if his sense of excitement seemed more liberating to a schoolboy than Savonarola's dour prophecies of doom? Well, one had to grow out of it. Cellini's adventures were not for the likes of us. Anyhow he was "late." He wasn't born until 1500.

This date was all-important. Everything really creative, I learned, had come to full flower by 1492, the year of Lorenzo's death, Nothing had the same interest after. 1300 to 1500 were the mighty years, roughly speaking, and sometimes I tried to bring myself closer by asking what my own ancestors were doing in that choice age. It was not difficult to find a formula that said everything. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290 and expelled from Spain in 1492! That just about covered the period nicely.

"What kind of a man was Creighton?" I had asked Sedgewick. "How did he come to devote himself to this period?"

"Oh, a great man," said Sedgewick. "He

was trying desperately all his life to find out how Rome came to lose half of Europe, whether it had been inevitable, and what did it mean. Later, when he was Bishop of London, it became a very real problem, for he was the center of a tremendous struggle on incense and ritual. He had to take a very firm line. It needed courage . . . and knowledge . . . and he had both."

But my mind was not on Creighton that night. If anything, I was more in Cellini's world. The night before I had excused myself early, at about 9:30, but instead of going to my room had slipped out of the hotel, driven by an urge to savor Florence for myself. Where did the people go who left the hotel in the evening with such glittering cheerfulness? Perhaps in a café, or at the Opera, or in some dark glance thrown at me from a balcony or in a narrow cobbled street, I would meet the Florence of Benvenuto. The sap of life was bursting in me as I wandered happily through the crowd in the Via Tornabuoni.

I knew almost no Italian, but the gaiety of the chatter around me caught me up and I was suddenly enchanted to hear a joyful sound of music coming from nearby. Music in Italy! This is what I had been missing, and I moved towards it. As I approached, I realized that it was even more heart-warming than I had thought. A troupe of five Austrian youths, dressed in traditional Tyrolean costume, were standing in a corner of the Piazza playing student songs on an odd variety of instruments, a violin, an accordion, a guitar, and a clarinet, while the fifth, a handsome fair-haired lad carrying a placard stating simply in Italian: "We are walking to Rome," took around a collecting box. Occasionally two or three of the boys would sing out a chorus in simple harmony. Against this festive sound, the streetcars and carriages clattered by busily. Adding their own joy, the street lamps and café windows threw a dancing light on the soaring towers. The faces around were smiling and carefree.

As I stood there in the crowd, I became aware that a girl near me had begun to sing one of the songs with the students, a rollicking song that she was singing softly and nostalgically. She had a low, warm voice. I caught the words:

Studio auf einer Reis'
Juch heidi, juch heida.
Ganz famos zu leben weiss
Juch heidi, juch heida.

When she saw me looking at her, she broke into a smile, the deep smile that comes only when one is singing happily. She was young, dark, and shabbily dressed, but her face had the warmth that one finds in Italian women. The song had ended, and I smiled back, moved towards her, and braced myself for the effort to be gallant and devil-may-care in a language I hardly understood. My heart pumped away rapidly as I muttered something about her nice voice. I saw that she was looking at me searchingly, and when she spoke I knew what she thought she had seen in me.

"Sind Sie Jude?" she said.

Shades of Benvenuto Cellini! So much for the young Englishman abroad, the spiritual heir of Laurence Sterne and Lord Byron. *"Sind Sie Jude!"*

My German was rough but adequate.

"Yes, I am a Jew."

This time the smile was one of real welcome.

"Where do you come from? I know you are not an Italian Jew."

"No, I am from England. I am a tourist."

"So. I too am a tourist, of a kind, from Poland." She laughed, a little sadly. "You didn't think I was Jewish when you spoke to me."

I smiled back, rather uneasily, and then we both laughed.

"Let's go and have some coffee," I said.

When she laughed freely, all the sadness vanished. We continued to speak in German, but often she would use a Yiddish expression, and when she spoke Yiddish it had all the fruity tang of a complete language unlike the barbarous mixture that I had heard spoken around me in England.

MALCAH was her name. First I told her, in my halting German, which part of Poland my parents had come from. It was near her own home, and we laughed at the miracle which brought *landsleit* together in strange places. She found it quite hard to understand the circumstances in which I had come to Florence. "Your schoolteacher, a Christian *galach,* brought you here, for *nothing?*" I tried to explain the relation of Jew to Christian in England, but the whole thing seemed unreal to her. And then she told me her own story. In that cheerful café atmosphere, it was a good deal more difficult to understand than my own.

She and a companion, Moshe, had left Poland some days before, en route for Palestine, where they were to settle. Having been a student of art at the university, she had jumped at the chance of going through Italy, and they were to make their way to Haifa on a small tramp ship due to sail from the port of Livorno in a few days. So far it all sounded normal, but now began the confusion. For reasons which I could not quite follow, but which had something to do with an immigration quota, Moshe and she were to enter Palestine as man and wife, though they were not married. It soon became clear that months of finagling, mountains of intrigue, lay behind their plans, complicated by the fact that Moshe's father, and Moshe himself, were members in Poland of a political party, some brand of anarchists, I gathered, that was very decisively outlawed in Italy. Moshe could not therefore travel in Italy under his own name, his father being too well known to the police. To meet these various problems—she told it all to me with complete confidence that I would understand perfectly—they had been provided in Poland with two sets of passports, the first their own individual passports on which they had traveled out of Poland, and the second a joint passport with a false name on which they were to cross Italy, embark on the ship, and enter Palestine.

But Moshe was apparently the world's worst intriguer. It is in the nature of anarchists, of course, to be bunglers, almost their philosophy. Malcah had been carrying the joint passport, "for safety." They had arrived at the borders of Italy during the night and somewhat earlier than expected; and Moshe, asked for his passport, had thoughtlessly put his hand into his pocket and produced the wrong one, the passport, that is, which bore his real name. The carabinieri had found this name quickly on their black list and marched him off for interrogation. Malcah, fortunately, had been standing away from him when it happened. She had presented her own passport when her turn came, had been admitted without trouble, and was now ready to leave. But she was without her "husband."

"But why haven't you gone straight on to Livorno, now?" I asked her. "Aren't you worried?"

"All my life I have wanted to see Florence," she said. "This will be my last chance, I am sure. I am staying at an address which Moshe knows. If he does not turn up here, perhaps he will reach Livorno in time. If not . . . ," she shrugged her shoulders, "I will have to see. But I have loved everything in Florence. To be here alone, to wander day after day through the galleries seeing the great masters has meant everything to me."

This was the hardest thing of all for me to understand, her ability to enjoy Florence with all Sedgewick's calm and devotion while her life was in such confusion. The rest—false passports and police—was perhaps not so extraordinary for a real European. I recalled that my own parents had originally left Poland thirty years earlier on a false passport. It had not been considered very unusual in those days. I suddenly thought also of a story of Cellini's that I had read in his *Memoirs* that week, how, fleeing for his life from the police of this very city, four hundred years earlier, he had disguised himself as a monk with the help of his friend Fra Alesso, and slipped away to Siena under the very noses of the Florentine police. Still, to connect all this with a simple Jewish girl, who might have been my sister or my cousin, sitting beside me drinking coffee, was quite an effort.

It became easier when Malcah told me about her life in Poland, the bitter hatred between Jew and non-Jew, the bloody fights at the university when Jewish students resisted the *numerus clausus* edicts and took whole courses standing rather than sit on the allotted "yellow badge" benches. She had spent one year studying in Vienna, where she had picked up the student song that I had heard her sing that night, and this was in retrospect the happiest year of her life.

But to her, the tranquil life of an English Jew, and of English students generally, seemed equally mystifying.

"What political party do you belong to?" she asked me.

"Oh, I don't know. I suppose I'm a Liberal."

"Yes, everybody's liberal. But what faction?"

She was puzzled at anyone not wanting to get his position quite clear.

"Have you taken part in many demonstrations?" she wanted to know.

"Well, no. But we do have political debates sometimes."

"Debates? What do you debate?"

"Oh, I think the last debate we had was on the question whether it was right to execute King Charles."

"King Charles? When was that? Oh, you mean at the time of Cromwell?" Incredulously. "You are still debating *that?*"

We talked on and on. At a café bar, we ordered liqueurs, and raised our glasses to each other with a word that brought us together: *l'chayim.* Then I walked her home and said good night.

"Can I help you in any way?" I asked her.

"I don't know. Perhaps. I may still be in trouble. We shall see."

She gave me a friendly kiss when I left her, and I walked home full of excitement through the quiet streets. I had never been out so late in Florence. Under a scudding moon, all the modern city had dropped into darkness, and only the ancient buildings were left, monumental, and the gray Arno.

We were to meet again on Saturday evening.

THE Sedgewicks and I went our own ways on Saturday morning, but in the afternoon the Headmaster and I set off for a walk together across the Ponte Vecchio into the Boboli Gardens. As we sat in the flower gardens at the top of the hill, looking across the valley towards San Miniato, the Headmaster talked about the liberation that the Renaissance had brought to the human spirit. I nursed my secret. My mind was on Poland, and perhaps Sedgewick found me inexplicably truculent that afternoon.

"The Renaissance was no liberation for the Jews, you know," I told him. "It was really almost the opposite, a turning point backwards. Before the Renaissance the Jews were more literate than the Christians. They carried Greek learning to the Arabs and Arab learning to the Christians. But at the Renaissance, Christian education went forward and Jewish education retired into a shell for four hundred years. Israel Abrahams says in *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages:* 'The Jewish Middle Ages began just when the medieval cloud vanished from Christian society.' "

"But surely," said Sedgewick, "in Italy the Jews shared in the culture around them, and lived a very full life."

"Oh, yes, in Italy. But I was thinking of real Jewry, the great masses of Jews in Eastern Europe."

How could the Head know what was for him unknowable?

I met Malcah late that evening, and we talked again over coffee, and walked happily together, sometimes hand in hand, through the streets and along the Arno bank. We spoke little of Jewish things, much more of our schooldays and studies, exchanging quotations of French or German poetry, humming the themes of music we knew, and most of all talking of novels and novelists, an endless encircling subject. The awkwardness of our first meeting had gone, and we were together and alone, as two wanderers who have met by fate at the top of a mountain.

When I left her at the door of her pension, she told me, with great embarrassment, how I could help her.

"Can you lend me some money? I need

about a thousand lire to pay my bill here and to get my luggage to Livorno. And I would like to buy some reproductions. I don't know now if Moshe will appear. . . ."

A thousand lire was about ten pounds in real money. Ten pounds was a large sum for me to find, but I said I would have it for her by Tuesday at the latest.

Then, even more shyly, she said: "Could you travel with me to Livorno? It's not a great distance, but I am somehow a little worried about the police at railway stations. I would feel safer if you could come with me. And it would be nice if we could travel together. You are surely going to Pisa, and that is so close to Livorno."

I saw that she still had no understanding of my status with the Headmaster—or perhaps she understood him better than I did.

"I would love to," I said. "I will try . . . but it is a little hard."

I wanted desperately to go with her, to carry the whole thing off as a free person would, but what could I tell Sedgewick? To tell him the whole story, in all its simplicity, seemed quite impossible. Then what? I tried out a few far-fetched stories in my head. Should I tell him that I wanted to see the ancient synagogue at Livorno, the oldest in Italy? Should I talk about the famous Jewish scholars of Pisa and Livorno—Raphael Meldola, Azulai, Daniel da Pisa—and see what came up? Could I suggest quite innocently that I thought of going off for a few days alone to explore the country around?

I went into the railway station the next morning, while the Sedgewicks were at church, and sent off a telegram to Arthur, counting every word carefully: "WIRE TEN POUNDS HOOK CROOK POSTE RESTANTE FLORENCE" and I went back to the hotel, feeling a shadow growing around me.

How was it that on Monday morning at breakfast the Headmaster, reading his mail, looked up and said to me:

"Would you like a few days on your own, to trot over to Pisa, and perhaps down to Siena? Some dear friends of ours at Ravenna have asked us if we would motor over to see them for a couple of days, and if you would be quite happy on your own, we would like to. Yes, you must go down to Siena. Aeneas Sylvius's home ground, eh? How you will love it. One should see it, perhaps, for the first time alone. It bursts on one like a thunderclap of beauty. What wouldn't I give to see it again for the first time."

I looked at the Head and Mrs. Sedgewick, and the story of Malcah trembled on my lips. Some final block kept it back, some painful relic of Jewish or adolescent self-containment. I agreed to their plan, and wondered if they sensed my inner wretchedness.

At the post office, Arthur's telegram was waiting for me with a draft for twelve pounds. Good old Arthur. My spirits rose. When I met Malcah briefly that day I told her that all was well. I would go with her.

As THE train pulled out of Florence the next morning, I felt at first an exultant sense of adventure. With a carriage to ourselves we had, for a brief moment, got the better of the world around us. We gave each other a hug of welcome, but then sat silent side by side for a long time, as it seemed, watching the olives and cypresses flash by, and sharing a sadness whose cause was gradually borne in on me. Malcah said nothing, but I knew that she was thinking of the Vienna that she had grown to love, and of her week in Florence, leisurely days of art and beauty that were now over. She had needed me for this last short journey not for protection but to share her nostalgia. I felt it all in the deep silence and in the tears glistening in her eyes. The Europe she loved had rejected her. She would settle and build in Palestine. She would take new root, perhaps win a new freedom. But she had been rejected.

We walked around Pisa, saying little, but happy to be sharing this last breath of Italy. It was a golden day, when walking itself seemed like floating in air. At Livorno all was so normal and orderly that we laughed at the anti-climax. Moshe had been released and had made his own way down to Livorno that very day. He was due back at the ship within an hour. Malcah and I walked along the shore promenade together for a last word before she went on board.

"I will send you the money very soon," she said.

"I know you will. Don't worry about it."

We were at the ship's side now.

"Goodbye, Malcah," I said.

She threw her arms around me, and the tears streamed down her cheeks. I kissed her ardently, and she stumbled up to the ship. Our story was at an end.

Back at school two weeks later, the episode seemed hardly worth telling, even to Arthur. It had lost its urgency. Three months later, six pounds arrived from Malcah, and three months after that the remaining six pounds. She wrote again to me twice, the second time with bitter anger at the British. Then twelve years of silence, and the news of her death.

Goodbye, Malcah. Our story seemed worth telling at last. I have told it now for one who wants to understand—for Sedgewick.

E. A. POE

HOWARD O. SACKLER

THERE were sad, yet certain, rustlings
Of the frosted Boston curtain
When Poe,
Having re-emptied Pandora's box,
Was ushered out forever
And buried in it.

For years, however,
A "hideous heart"
Underneath Poe's floorboards
Amazed his Bronx neighbors
With truly vaudevillian tricks
(Some fancied)
Until,

After a prolonged exposure
To sea-air and absinthe,
The colors, the perfumes and the
  sounds
Croaked in weak correspondence
Across the waters.

Then the reverence braked the fright
To a practical stoppage,
And pedestrians went bicycling
To Poe's Bronx Cottage.

And,
The laconic word
Of his onyx bird
Christened a gin-mill.
(Oo-La-La. U La Lume.)

And,
They have nurtured a park
Near the old landmark
With a bandshell,
For preventive dancing.

On Wednesday evenings
The trombone's limited mating call
Rattles the old museum nearby . . .

> "*'You jest,' he exclaimed, recoiling a few*
>   *paces,*
> *'but let us proceed to the Amontillado.'*"

Wordsworth, among others,
Though not of pioneer stock,
May rest in peace.

HOWARD O. SACKLER's poems have appeared in *Accent* and other magazines. Born in New York City in 1929, he was recently graduated from Brooklyn College, and is now at work on a verse play.

GERTRUD KOLMAR: THE WOMAN AND THE BEASTS

"I Am Going the Way I Have Chosen to Go. . . ."

JACOB PICARD

ON OCTOBER 26, 1941, a Jewish woman in Berlin wrote a letter to a relative who had reached a haven of safety outside Germany. At that time the deportation of German Jews to the extermination camps in the East had been proceeding for more than a year and a half, and the sense of their lost liberty, and of their helplessness and hopelessness in the face of the menacing future, weighed heavily on those still remaining behind. She wrote: "Believe me when I say that come what may I shall not be unhappy, I shall not despair, because I know that I am going the way I have chosen in my heart to go. . . . So many of us, through the centuries, have gone that way, why should I wish a different one? Even now, in these last moments, my father thought of emigrating to Uruguay to join his brother. There is a question whether it is still possible to do that; he wanted to leave for my sake—his own life he regards as ended—but I said no. It would be something forced on me solely by external circumstances; I don't want to run away from what I feel in my heart I ought to undergo. In the past I never knew, as I know now, how strong I am, and knowing this makes me very happy. . . ."

In February 1943 her last letter reached her sister in Switzerland. At that time she was working as a slave laborer pasting cartons in a munitions factory. The octogenarian father whom she had not wanted to part with was already in Theresienstadt. After that she was heard from no more.

Her name was Gertrud Chodziesner. As a poet she had sometimes used the name of Gertrud Kolmar. A poet died with her, and the world lost no ordinary poet in this death.

AFTER the Emancipation, the German Jews for more than a hundred years had enjoyed a distinctive communal life. This was not limited to purely religious activities carried on in the famous rabbinical schools and "congregations" in the exact sense of that term. The *kehillot*, for all the outward tendency of the Jews to assimilate, provided religious sustenance, and also encouraged important scientific work in Jewish history and sociology. On the other hand, most individual creative work tended, as it did everywhere in the West, to merge with that of the surrounding world, and often very successfully.

But after the First World War the situation changed. The B'nai B'rith took over the task of cultural education as its own, Zionism kept growing stronger, and creative writers devoted themselves more and more to purely Jewish ends. This was made easier for them by the existence of several excellently edited periodicals, among them the *Jüdische Rundschau*, edited by Kafka's friend Robert Weltsch, the *C. V. Zeitung*, and, excelling

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THE poetess Gertrud Chodziesner (Gertrud Kolmar), who after working as a slave laborer in a Berlin munitions plant was sent to her death in an extermination camp, was one of the most remarkable of the figures in the German Jewish cultural upsurge under the early years of Hitler's regime. One short volume of poetry, published in 1938, just before the pogroms that marked the end of the period of Nazi tolerance of Jewish activity, was enough to indicate her importance; in recent years, more of her work has come to light in Germany. JACOB PICARD has himself published two volumes of poetry, a volume of short stories depicting the life of South German country Jews, and numerous magazine articles. He was born in Wangen, in Southern Germany, studied at the Universities of Munich, Berlin, and Heidelberg, and practiced law in Constance and Cologne. He escaped to this country in 1940. The present article was translated from the German by Martin Greenberg.

in terms of literary interest, *Der Morgen*. (These survived until the pogrom of November 1938; the distinguished journal *Der Jude*, edited by Martin Buber and Ernst Simon, had perished earlier.) In painting and the graphic arts, too, there was a marked tendency toward a narrower Jewish concentration.

And so when the cataclysm came, an already existing framework made it possible for creative work to be continued. In the early years of the Nazi regime there came a sudden and unparalleled upsurge of the creative and performing arts, carried on by Jews for an exclusively Jewish audience. The movement gave spiritual nourishment to thousands, strengthening them in their Jewish identity amid all the degradations and dangers to which they were exposed. This was the time when many were receiving spiritual strength from the teachings of Franz Rosenzweig and Leo Baeck. The Kulturbund was founded, and was active not only in the big cities but throughout the country; its theatrical productions, lectures, and public readings served to distract people, for a time, from the exceptional cares of those years. All this was managed by the Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden, at the head of which stood the venerable Baeck, aided by such others as Otto Hirsch, Paul Eppstein, and Julius L. Seligsohn; these men sacrificed themselves for the community, and the three latter subsequently died the death of martyrs.

Thus it happened that in this period of the downfall of German Jewry new and hitherto unknown names came to the fore in fiction and, more especially, in lyric poetry. For reasons which we cannot here go into, these names are still little known on this side of the Atlantic, except that recently a great deal has been heard about the lyric poet Nelly Sachs, whose work does indeed merit recognition. She, happily, escaped the ordeal of the concentration camp, and was rescued and brought to Sweden by Selma Lagerlöf. But she was only one of several women poets who made their appearance in those threatening days and who from the very first displayed an original and mature poetic style. It is something that seldom happens in poetry and is therefore all the more precious when it does. A lyric poem, if it is to endure, must display, above all, originality and distinction of form; often, given individual poems to read, one only too easily confounds the names of their authors.

Oddly, not a single new male poet appeared who can be ranked with the several first-rate women poets of this time. There were of course a number of works of the highest order published by men whose names were already well established in German literature: like Karl Wolfskehl, who, after his long association with the Stefan George circle, turned for the first time to writing lyrics of the purest kind about the Jewish fate that had overwhelmed him; and Alfred Mombert, whose place in the front rank of German lyric poetry, next to Rilke and George, had long been acknowledged.

Wolfskehl died an octogenarian two years ago in exile in New Zealand. His book *Die Stimme ruft*, published in 1936,* and the poems of Gertrud Chodziesner, together represent both climax and end of a tragic development which had its beginnings—in some ways very doubtfully—with Heine. Tragic, certainly: this poetry which so purely expresses the Jewish consciousness and avows the Jewish fate finds its medium in the noblest German—the language of the people who condemned the creators of the poetry to death.

IN 1938, only a few months before the pogroms that wrote *finis* to everything, a book of poems entitled *Die Frau und die Tiere* ("The Woman and the Beasts") was published by Gertrud Chodziesner, whose name had been scarcely heard before. It was probably the last book put out by a Jewish publisher in Germany. On the strength of this single instance of her powers, the author was hailed as an extraordinary appearance in the field of lyric poetry. The publication of her poetic remains, since the end of the war,

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*By Schocken Verlag. An English translation was issued by Schocken Books in New York in 1947, under the title *1933: A Poem Sequence*.

confirms this judgment, and justifies the highest praise.

She was born December 10, 1894, the daughter of a well-known Berlin attorney. She grew up in the typical spiritual and social atmosphere of a German Jewish upper-middle-class family at a time when on the surface everything seemed to be going well, with the dream of assimilation still unshattered. Yet in one respect, at least, her background was not typical: the family owned an estate in the Mark Brandenburg where the children passed a considerable part of their youth. This experience played an important part in the creative life of the eldest daughter Gertrud. The metaphors she uses in her poetry, in the book mentioned above especially, would seem to characterize her as coming not from a family of Jewish intellectuals but from the Brandenburg peasantry or from among the fishermen at one of the many lakes surrounded by the woods of that region; rarely is there an image in her poems to recall that they were written by a woman of the metropolis. The very title of her book, *Die Frau und die Tiere,* suggests the unusual, hinting at solitude and an absence of human intercourse, a turning to the eternal world of dumb creation at whose hands one need fear no disappointment. She never married; indeed, it was the deep disappointment she met with in a love affair that brought her poetry to its full stature; in the shock of this experience she found herself. However, unlike those effusions of the second-rate so painfully prompt to take the reader into their confidence, very seldom does her verse refer directly to her personal experiences. In this as in many other ways she takes her place beside those few immortal old maids who stand in the forefront of the lyrical poetry of the Western world—Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore, Emily Dickinson. The resemblance here is not only biographical, it is also aesthetic.

ANNETTE VON DROSTE-HÜLSHOFF, who died a hundred years ago, brought to the German poetry of her times a new realism that transcended the prevailing romanticism, and she has always been considered the greatest German lyric poetess; her accomplishment in the German language was unmatched until Gertrud Chodziesner appeared. At this point, to be sure, the name of Else Lasker-Schueler will occur to many; yet it must be said that her poetry, compared with Gertrud Chodziesner's—even if we disregard the latter's greater range—has something contrived and artificial about it. Else Lasker-Schueler, for all the special charm of her work, was only a late representative of those romanticists who made use of the played-out ideas of the fairy tales as symbols for their fantasies; she lived in the Berlin Bohemia of the first decades of this century and was popular in the literary circles of the time, but she remained the eccentric voice of a romanticism that had passed into history—a woman born too late.*

Gertrud Chodziesner, Else Lasker-Schueler's younger sister in art, was entirely a child of her own time and lived the full life of a citizen, removed from the narrow world of literary faddism, which she despised. In this detachment from the literary world, also, she resembled Droste-Hülshoff and Emily Dickinson; alone, she created her work, and never talked of it. As for Nelly Sachs, the only other German poetess whose work might be placed beside that of Gertrud Chodziesner, she is at best a delicate harpist of limited range—though very genuine, too. On the basis of the poetry she wrote in exile, she too would rank above Else Lasker-Schueler in terms of universal human significance. In fact, when one considers Gertrud Chodziesner's gift to lyrical realism, it can be said that except for the Austrian lyricist Ernst Waldinger, now living in this country, there is perhaps not a single Jewish poet, male or female, whose work is so solidly rooted in the multiplicity of the external natural world and so shaped by an utterly unabstract and deeply felt experience. And yet each of her poems rests on its own special laws, derived from the material of experience but growing into a new, organic form, uncompromisingly disciplined.

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* For a different estimate of Else Lasker-Schueler, see Heinz Politzer's essay "The Blue Piano of Else Lasker-Schueler," in the April 1950 COMMENTARY—ED.

During the First World War, when she was working as a translator in the German Foreign Office—she had a considerable gift for foreign languages—a book of her verse appeared, and shortly after the end of the war a second book, with the expressive title *Preussische Waffen* ("Prussian Arms"). But she herself knew that she had not yet found her proper accent; these first two volumes went almost unnoticed and for a long time no more was heard from her, until at last she felt confident of her maturity.

Just before German culture fell prey to Hitler, the exacting Insel Verlag, publishers of Rilke, decided to put out a volume of her poems. Several of these had already appeared in the annual Insel *Almanach*. Events put a stop to everything. Thus it was not until 1938, with *Die Frau und die Tiere*, that she was able to publish any considerable body of work deserving of close study. This volume is made up of two poem cycles: *Weibliches Bildnis* ("Feminine Portrait") and *Tierträume* ("Animal Dreams"). Titles of the individual poems give some indication of the range of her subjects; "The Jewess," "The Ugly Woman," "The Blind Woman," "The Old Maid," "Grandmother," "The Spirit of the Sea," "The Herons," "The Bee," "The Otters," "The Roe," "The Toad Demon," "The Morning Birds."

So much we knew of her before she died. Since then some of her poetry has been published posthumously in Germany: the book *Welten* ("Worlds")—not a very happy title—and a wide-ranging cycle of fifteen poems printed last year in the excellent magazine *Sinn und Form* which is published in the Russian Zone of Berlin. This year the Peter Suhrkamp Verlag of Berlin, successor to S. Fischer, will issue her collected works, including several stories and plays never before published. All her published works now appear under the name of Gertrud Kolmar. With her extraordinary gift for language, she had learned Hebrew in her very last years; so well, in fact, that she had begun to write poems in the language. But none of them has been preserved.

It is difficult to convey the quality of poetry as unique as this later work of Gertrud Chodziesner without the reader's having before him a selection of the poems in the original German. For they not only extend the area of experience that the lyric has dealt with, but also possess the consummate formal perfection, the organic inevitability of form, so vital to the genre. Many of the verses of this poet are crystalline in their rigor of form, and at the same time spare and pure in their intellectual and emotional quality, to a degree that we otherwise find only in the work of men, and then only seldom. There is nothing in her poetry of cheap and passing irony, and none of those modish psychological experiments in subject matter—mere prose turned mechanically into verse—which one meets with so often these days in this country.

The poems in *Welten* are composed of loose, long, flowing unrhymed lines of free verse on the order of Walt Whitman's, but there is imposed on them—even more, perhaps, in her work than in Whitman's—the inner constraint of a kind of fugal meter. Yet the old essential melos is preserved. By an act of unique intuition, the poems succeed in objectifying the writer's ultimate inner experience of plants, animals, visionary landscapes, in achieving mastery over the dark forces of the inexplicable to which the poet is peculiarly close. We might call some of the poems elegies of a unique sort, others are in essence ballads, and in many there is a demonism at work such as has never before been encountered in poetry written by a woman.

The work recently published in *Sinn und Form* may perhaps be said to be even more strikingly perfect. In these last poems, written shortly before her death, in the full consciousness of what surely awaited her, Gertrud Chodziesner completely realized herself as artist and human being. The form she uses is again the severe stanza of her first important work published ten years before. All was written—it cannot be sufficiently emphasized—under the pressures of that period of dreadful expectancy, and it is moving to see how the quiet resolution displayed in the letter quoted at the beginning of these remarks is unflaggingly maintained in these poems. Not one of the events of those fearful days is used directly in journalistic fashion for the subject of a poem; but one can feel in the very rhythms of the poems the tremors of what was taking place and the great and bitter melancholy of death and decline. There is the absolute beauty and perfection of such a poem as *Abschied* ("Parting"), which might almost have been written by Christina Rossetti; the poem is worth quoting in full:

Nach Osten send ich mein Gesicht:
Ich will es von mir tun.
Es soll dort drüben sein im Licht,
Ein wenig auszuruhn
Von meinem Blick auf diese Welt,
Von meinem Blick auf mich,
Die plumpe Mauer Täglich Geld,
Des Treibrad Sputedich.

Sie trägt, die Welt in Rot und Grau
Durch Jammerschutt und Qualm
Die Auserwählten, Tropfentau
An einem Weizenhalm.
Ein glitzernd rascher Lebenslauf,
Ein Schütteln grosser Hand:
Die einen frass der Mittag auf,
Die andern schluckt der Sand.

Drum werd ich fröhlich sein und still,
Wenn ich mein Soll getan;
In tausend kleinen Wassern will
Ich rinnen mit dem Schwan,
Der ohne Rede noch Getön
Und ohne Denken wohl
Ein Tier, das stumm, ein Tier, das schön,
Kein Geist und kein Symbol.

Und wenn ich dann nur leiser Schlag
An blasse Küsten bin,
So roll ich frühen Wintertag,
Den silbern kühlen Sarkophag
Des ewigen Todes hin,
Darin mein Antlitz dünn und leicht
Wie Spinneweben steht,
Ein wenig um die Winkel streicht,
Ein wenig flattert, lächelnd bleicht
Und ohne Qual verweht.

(To the East I send my face:
I want to get it away from me.
Let it stay in the light over there,
To rest up a little
From my looking at the world,
From my looking at myself,
The great wall Daily Money
The drive-wheel Hurry Up.

That world in red and gray, it brings,
Through ruins and smoke,
The chosen, dewdrops
On a stalk of wheat.
A glittering, hurried life,
The trembling of a great hand:
One the midday ate up,
The other was gulped by the sand.

Therefore I shall be happy and still
When I have done my task;
In a thousand little streams
I want to flow with the swan,
Who is without speech or sound
And without thought,
A beast that is dumb, a beast that is
  beautiful,
No spirit and no symbol.

And when I have become but a soft pulsing
Against pale shores,
Then on an early winter's day
I shall roll away the silver cool sarcophagus
Of eternal death,
Wherein my face shows thin and light
Like cobweb threads,
Stretching a little at the corners,
Fluttering a little, pale and smiling,
Blown away without pang.)

There is the full-blown nobility of "Leda"; the restrained sorrow of *Die alte Frau* ("The Old Woman"); the mournful vision of the ballad-like *Die Tiere Nineves* ("The Beasts of Nineveh"), the story of Jonah, whose title and theme sufficiently proclaim its intention; and there is the shocking *Der Tag der grossen Klage* ("The Day of the Great Lamentation")—all these demonstrate the vast scope of the poet's powers. There is the poem *Asien* ("Asia"), which begins: "*Mutter, die du mir warst, eh mich die meine wiegte, ich kehre heim*" ("Mother, you who were with me before my own mother rocked me, I am returning home"); and above all there is the poem *Wir Juden* ("We Jews"), written in her last loneliness as a kind of consolation—perhaps the profoundest recent summing up of the millennial Jewish experience:

Nur Nacht hört zu. Ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich, mein Volk,
Und will dich ganz mit Armen umschlingen heiss und fest,
So wie ein Weib den Gatten, der am Pranger steht, am Kolk,
Die Mutter den geschmähten Sohn nicht einsam sinken lässt.

Und wenn ein Knebel dir im Mund den blutenden Schrei verhält,
Wenn deine zitternden Arme nun grausam eingeschnürt,
So lass mich Ruf, der in den Schacht der Ewigkeiten fällt,
Die Hand mich sein, die aufgereckt an Gottes hohen Himmel rührt.

Denn der Grieche schlug aus Berggestein seine weissen Götter hervor,
Und Rom warf über die Erde einen ehernen Schild,
Mongolische Horden wirbelten aus Asiens Tiefen empor,
Und die Kaiser in Aachen schauten ein südwärts gaukelndes Bild.

Und Deutschland trägt und Frankreich trägt ein Buch und ein blitzendes Schwert,
Und England wandelt auf Meeresschiffen bläulich silbernen Pfad,
Und Russland ward riesiger Schatten mit der Flamme auf seinem Herd,
Und wir, wir sind geworden durch den Galgen und durch das Rad.

Dies Herzzerspringen, der Todesschweiss, ein tränenloser Blick
Und der ewige Seufzer am Marterpfahl, den heulender Wind verschlang,
Und die dürre Kralle, die elende Faust, die aus Scheiterhaufen und Strick
Ihre Adern grün wie Vipernbrut dem Würger entgegenrang,

Der greise Bart, in Höllen versengt, von Teufelsgriff zerfetzt,
Verstümmelt Ohr, zerrissene Brau und dunkelnder Augen Flehn:
Ihr! Wenn die bittere Stunde reift, so will ich aufstehn hier und jetzt,
So will ich wie ihr Triumphtor sein, durch das die Qualen gehn!

Ich will den Arm nicht küssen, den ein strotzendes Zepter schwellt,
Nicht das erzene Knie, den tönernen Fuss des Abgotts harter Zeit;
O könnt' ich wie lodernde Fackel in die finstere Wüste der Welt
Meine Stimme heben: Gerechtigkeit! Gerechtigkeit! Gerechtigkeit!

Knöchel. Ihr schleppt doch Ketten, und gefangen klirrt mein Gehn.
Lippen. Ihr seid versiegelt, in glühendes Wachs gesperrt.
Seele. In Käfiggittern einer Schwalbe flatterndes Flehn.
Und ich fühle die Faust, die das weinende Haupt auf den Aschenhügel mir zerrt.

Nur Nacht hört zu. Ich liebe dich, mein Volk im Plunderkleid.
Wie der heidnischen Erde, Gäas Sohn entkräftet zur Mutter glitt,
So wirf dich du dem Niederen hin, sei schwach, umarme das Leid,
Bis einst dein müder Wanderschuh auf den Nacken der Starken tritt!

(Only the night listens. I love you, I love you, my people,

And want to hold you warm and close in my arms
As a woman embraces her husband bound to the whipping post,
As a mother at the pondside won't let her reviled son sink all alone.

And if a gag stifles the bleeding shriek in your mouth,
If your trembling arms are now cruelly bound,
Let mine be the cry that plummets into the pit of eternity,
Mine the hand that stretches up to touch God's high heaven.

For the Greek struck his white gods out of mountain rock,
And Rome flung a brazen shield across the earth,
Mongol hordes whirled out of Asia's depths,
And the Emperors in Aachen looked southwards to a delusion.

And Germany bears and France bears a book and a glittering sword,
And England roams in ships the bluish-silvery paths of the sea,
And the flame on Russia's hearth makes her shadow hugely swell,
And we, by the gallows and the wheel we came to our maturity.

This bursting heart, the death sweat, a tearless glance,
And the eternal groan at the martyr's stake drowned in the howling wind,
And the thin claw, the wrinkled fist, its veins green as an adder's brood,
That reaches out of pyre and rope to grapple with the executioner.

The gray beard, singed in hell, plucked by the devil's hand,
Cropped ear, scored brow, and dim imploring eyes:
You! When the bitter hour grows full, I'll stand up here and now,
I'll be the arch of triumph for your torments to march through.

I'll not kiss the arm swollen by a boastful scepter,
Nor the brazen knee, the clay foot of the idol of this hard time;
Oh, if I could lift my voice like a flaring torch
In the dark waste of the world. Justice! Justice! Justice!

Ankle. But you drag a chain, and my hobbled step rattles.
Lips. You are sealed, stopped with glowing wax.
Soul. Behind the cage bars a swallow's fluttering appeal.
And I feel the fist that drags my weeping head to the ash heap.

Only the night listens. I love you, my people in rags.
Like the pagan Earth's, Gaia's son, who crawled exhausted to his mother,
Cast yourself under the foot of the meanest, be weak, take grief in your arms,
Till one day your weary wanderer's foot shall press on the neck of the strong.)

THERE have been few lyric poets able always to resist being seduced by their verbal dexterity into the making of verse that might just as well have remained unmade, verse lacking all inner life. In the work of Gertrud Chodziesner there is not a single such poem; each springs from a deep inner need to which the poet, with inexorable self-discipline, has given the one possible form.

Last winter the Berlin radio dedicated a program to her memory. Among other tributes, a letter was read from the novelist Elisabeth Langgässer (who died some weeks ago) to the dead poet's publisher. "I have always loved them," Mrs. Langgässer wrote, "these strange, immensely subtle, and melancholic stanzas. . . . What a solitude, what a flight like a bat's along opal evening skies submerging into dusk! . . . As a woman, as a lyric poet, and as a person of the same blood, I should have liked to have written the preface or the epilogue to these poems."

The Germans destroyed her body, but not the immortal voice speaking their language.

HEBREW AS SHE IS SPOKE

Ivrit, Sabrit, Sleng, and Pinglish

RUTH GRUBER

IT IS no small thing to take the tongue of Solomon's love songs and Moses' laws and make it the language of a new state, of bus drivers and farmers and statesmen, to make it so alive that it can be used by soldiers on the Arab fronts and by diplomats in world assemblies. Since all do not as yet speak Hebrew in Israel, a ride in a bus is like a trip through a latter-day Babel. Straphangers holding on for dear life speak French, German, English, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Polish, or Yiddish. Arabs in *keffiyehs* (headdress) and Yemenite women in embroidered pants, talking Arabic, sit next to people who speak Hebrew with all accents, including the Scandinavian.

However, the effort to make everyone talk Hebrew goes on unremittingly, though not without rear-guard sniping from the older tongues. During the fighting with the Arabs in Jerusalem, an old lady sat huddled in a bus while Arab shots whizzed all around. She put her hands to her head and shouted indignantly: *"Dort shiest men, un do ret men Ivrit!*—Over there, they're shooting, and here they're talking Hebrew!"

Some of the Germans of "Hitler's aliyah" found Hebrew an almost impossible language to master. They tell the story of a German Jew drowning in the sea at Nahariya, who shouted: *"Ezra, ezra!*—Help, help!" Another German Jew, walking along the beach, saw him and shouted back: *"Ivrit hast du gelernt? Schwimmen hättest du lernen sollen!*—Hebrew you've learned? You should have learned to swim!"

MOST of the newer immigrants do not know Hebrew. They are studying it in quick courses given everywhere—in the schools, in the army, even at the police stations. They need it, of course, for jobs, just as new immigrants to America needed English to get work.

In a few days, every visitor and new immigrant picks up the most common words. *Shalom* ("peace") is the greeting that you hear more than any other word in Israel. *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* became on a movie marquee *Shalom, Chaver Chips.* "Thank you very much" is *toda raba.* And one of the expressions a visitor needs most is *rega echad* (pronounced ray-ga-hot), which literally means "one minute," but can mean anything from an hour to a day. Trying to get off a bus, you break a path toward the door, shout *"rega, rega, rega"* as loud as you can, run like mad, and jump off.

A tourist can get along quite well with English, very well with Yiddish and German, but, if he comes with even a little Hebrew, he can find himself far along the road toward making friends. But he soon discovers two things. First, the Israeli accents will be strange to him. He has probably been speaking Hebrew with an Ashkenazic accent, the accent of Eastern and Central Europe. In Israel, Hebrew is spoken with the Sephardic accent. Second, he quickly realizes that the language of the bus drivers and soldiers and children on the street is not so much *Ivrit* (Hebrew) as "Sabrit," the language of the native-born sabras, a brand new language, called by some of the soldiers *sleng.*

Sleng, which of course is "Sabrit" for "slang," is a wonderful language built while you run. Any good explosive onomatopoetic word can be dropped into the grab bag. It is made up of English, French, Russian, Yiddish, German, Arabic, and any other lan-

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SINCE the establishment of Israel, the adaptation of Hebrew, language of piety and learning, to the uses of daily life has been proceeding at a high rate of acceleration, with results that are often amazing and sometimes amusing. RUTH GRUBER here offers some samples of Hebrew as currently spoken, in a report which, she assures us, only skims the surface. Miss Gruber is the author of *I Went to the Soviet Arctic* and *Destination Palestine.* Her latest book, *Israel Without Tears,* from which the material here is drawn, is to be published this month by A. A. Wyn.

guage, simply switched into Hebrew syntax.

Sleng can be divided into three categories:

1. Pure Hebrew of which the meaning is metaphorical. For example, ***nidbak** [l'] shinaim* means literally "it's glued to the teeth"; in "Sabrit" it means "delicious."

2. English words, phrases, and idioms lifted bodily into Hebrew. "Get cracking" becomes *'stadek,* which means "split yourself up in small pieces." During the early days of the Arab-Jewish war, American students, mostly ex-soldiers who had been studying at the Hebrew University, spent their evenings infiltrating American slang into Hebrew *sleng.* Literally translated, phrases like "big wheel," "eager beaver," and others have become part of the new language.

3. Words brought over intact from another language with variations on the accent and a jovial broadening of the usage. One of the most common words is *puntcher,* from the American "puncture," though it has nothing to do with a tire. Anything that goes wrong, from putting your slip on backwards to getting fired, is a *puntcher.* A hitch-hike is a *tremp,* from the British "tramp," and a *trempiste* is a boy who rides on his thumb. Transportation is such a problem in the new state that the roads are full of *trempistim* (note the "im," Hebrew plural ending for nouns) who queue up at various points, while an MP stops every military vehicle and any civilian vehicle and gets the *trempiste* a *tremp. Qvaker,* pronounced like the "qvack" of Donald Duck, is the name for any cereal. It comes from *Qvaker* Oats. A *shvitzer* (from the German *Schwätzer* for a man who talks a lot) is someone who runs around in a fury, talks constantly of how much he does, makes everyone mad, and gets practically nothing accomplished.

For me, the most descriptive word in the language is the Yiddish word *nudnik,* in all its forms. Brought over by the Russian Jews, the word is used for anybody who is a bore. There are wonderful variations on *nudnik.* A *phudnik* is a *nudnik* with a Ph.D.; a *shudnik* is a *nudnik* who says, "Should I—shouldn't I?" and so on.

"So what?" or "never mind" is *malesh,* which every American soldier in Cairo or Casablanca learned, and which must be spoken with the Arabic shrug of the right shoulder.

The most accomplished "slengists" are the Israeli soldiers. They look down with rare contempt upon the grammarians who are building modern Hebrew out of the Bible and who thumb through the Old Testament to find something in Isaiah or Jeremiah that resembles a jeep, which in *sleng* is simply a *jip.*

HERE is a list of words and expressions, including many built from languages all over the world, spoken by accomplished "slengists":

artiste: a man who never does any work and gets away with it. In the Israeli army there are two kinds of people, *artistes* and soldiers.

bek-ex: the back axle of a car. A *bek ex'l* is a small *bek-ex.* A front axle is a *front bek-ex,* and a small front axle is a *front bek-ex'l.*

Ben Gurionchiki: an affectionate name for a child born at the time the British slowed down Jewish immigration. Ben Gurion was urging mothers to defy the British by having large families. It was a kind of immigration from within.

bnai dodenu (lit., "our cousins"): Arabs.

blintze (from the Russian): a pancake. But since nothing is simple in Israel, there is constant debate on whether to call a pancake *blintze, melintze, blinitzi, blintshe, blintzke,* or *blintses.*

chutzpa: a combination of cheek and guts, sassy; the classic definition: a man who murders his father and mother and then pleads for mercy on the ground that he is an orphan.

dreher (from the German, lit., "twister"): a man who wangles himself in and out of situations, usually with success.

eisen (from the German): colossal, terrific, super.

eisen beton (lit., "iron concrete"): super-colossal.

festukes: peanuts; what little boys call little girls.

finjan (from the Arabic): an Arabic coffee pot. Young Israelis sit around a *finjan* the way young Americans sit around a campfire.

fresh: salmon; because in some farm colonies all the salmon cans from America had a large word "fresh" printed across them.

jip: the most popular vehicle in Israel.

jokair (from the British "joker"): an Englishman.

habibi (from the Arabic): darling, sweetie; *ya habib'ti*—"Hi, toots."

kumsitz (from the German, lit., "come sit"): informal gathering, usually around an Arabic coffee pot; see *finjan*.

l'kaleps (from the English): to collapse.

lo fidaltee (from the Yiddish *nit gefiedelt*, lit., "did not play the violin"): sour grapes; so, I didn't succeed; a fellow can try.

masmer (lit., "a nail"): a poor fool—a man whom everybody hammers on the head.

mea achuz (lit., "100 per cent"): mission accomplished, everything O.K. *Eisen mea achuz* is supercolossal.

meshuga: "nuts." The classical Hebrew word for "mad" is *meshuga*.

meshugayim l'sport: sport fans.

messtink: mess tin.

namer (formed from the first letters of *nudnik madrega rishona*): nudnik first class. Literally, *namer* is Hebrew for "leopard."

nudnik: a pest, an ear-bender (see above). The difference between a summer *nudnik* and a winter *nudnik* is that you can tell a summer *nudnik* right away, but it takes a little longer with a winter *nudnik*; you have to wait until he removes his coat.

nylon: terrific, marvelous; see *eisen*.

qvaker: any cereal (as noted above).

shlemiel (from the Yiddish): bull in a china shop.

shlimazel (from the Yiddish): a poor fool who has only bad luck. The difference between a *shlemiel* and a *shlimazel* is that a *shlemiel* is the man who spills the hot soup on the *shlimazel's* pants.

sabra (lit., a variety of cactus): a native-born Israeli, thorny outside but sweet and juicy within.

tchizbat (from the Arabic): tall stories told especially by soldiers; derived from the Arabic custom of sitting around a campfire telling true stories but with rich embroidery.

tchizbatron (from *tchizbat* and the Hebrew *teatron*, "theater"): the USO of Israel.

tziyonut: the boring conversation of an intellectual *nudnik*, derived from the Hebrew word for "Zionism," which you almost never hear in Israel except in this connection.

Yeke: German Jew; formed from the first letters of *Yehudim keshai oref*, "stiff-necked Jews." Or, perhaps, from the German *Jacke* ("jacket") which the German Jews continued to wear even for work on the kibbutz.

ANOTHER language spoken in Israel is "Pinglish"—Palestine English, born during the Mandate. "Pinglish" is English translated from Yiddish or German or Hebrew idioms. It is seen at its best on signs which are printed in both Hebrew and "Pinglish."

A butcher puts up a sign: I AM KILLING MYSELF TWICE A DAY.

A billboard on a road in Haifa, showing a torso properly brassiered and corseted, announces: CORSET SALOON.

A woman's dress shop declares: WOMEN CAN HAVE FITS HERE BY APPOINTMENT.

A doctor calls himself: SPECIALIST FOR WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES.

And in a Jerusalem garden, a corsetiere's sign says: CORSETS MADE TO ORDER. ENTRANCE FROM THE REAR.

IVRIT, Sabrit, Yiddish, English, Pinglish, and good humor are all applied with irreverent outspokenness to the situations and problems of life in Israel:

AN AIRPLANE was said to have flown over Tel Aviv on the anniversary of Independence, carrying Ben Gurion, Dov Joseph, who was Minister of Supply and Rationing, and Eliezer Kaplan, Minister of Finance. The three men looked down at the mass of people in the streets.

Kaplan said, "Just think how happy I could make all those people if I threw down ten thousand pounds in money."

Joseph said, "Just think how happy I could make them if I threw down ten thousand pounds of meat."

Ben Gurion said, "Just think how happy I could make them if I threw you both down."

ONE day, Ben Gurion and his wife were finishing their austerity meal in a cafeteria when they saw a clerk eating a huge dinner. Ben Gurion walked over to the clerk and said:

"Excuse me. I know how much you earn each week. How can you possibly afford such a meal on your salary?"

"Very simple," the clerk said. "The government made a mistake this week. They took my wages and gave me the income-tax deduction."

DOV JOSEPH is now said to be more religious than the Chief Rabbi. The Chief Rabbi makes you wait six hours between eating meat and milk. Joseph makes you wait six weeks.

THEY say that Israel is now concluding a new commercial pact with Egypt. The first item of business will be the resale of Joseph to the Egyptians.

THE morning after the bones of Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, were reburied on the highest hill in Jerusalem, Herzl's ghost visited Dov Joseph. Herzl said, "Tell me, Dov Joseph, how are things with my people in Israel?"

"Fine, fine," Joseph said. "The people are *with* me."

"Be careful," Herzl said. "The way things are going, in another year, they'll be with *me*."

DURING an air raid, a man waited in a queue for food. A bomb dropped near by. "For two thousand years," he sighed, "the Jews prayed to return to Israel—and it had to happen to me."

AN elderly couple arrived in Jerusalem during the water rationing. The wife complained to her husband that the apartment they had received was fine but that water flowed from the tap only one day a week.

Her husband was reassuring. "Don't worry, dear," he said. "The rest of the week the tap is reserved for milk and honey."

REILLY, an Irishman from America, went to Israel to live. One day an old friend from America arrived and saw Reilly drinking an Israeli brandy and soda.

"Reilly," he said, "and what are you doing in Israel?"

"I'm living the life of Cohen."

CHIEF RABBI ISAAC HERZOG, who was once Chief Rabbi of Eire, was talking with his good friend Eamon De Valera.

"A basic trait that our people have in common," Rabbi Herzog said, "is that the Irish don't know Gaelic and the Jews don't know Hebrew."

DOV JOSEPH received a telephone call. A voice said, "Mr. Minister, I think rationing is fine. The food restrictions are wonderful. People ought to be singing your praises all over the country."

Joseph, accustomed mostly to criticism, was pleased. "I'm delighted to hear you say that," he said. "Would you be willing to travel around the country and tell people?"

"I'd be glad to," the voice said. "But I have no strength."

A NEW immigrant complained to another new immigrant: "I'm sick of it. I queue up for food. I queue up for a ration book. I queue up for a medical examination. I'm going to shoot Ben Gurion."

The next day his friend met him on the street. "Well, how did you make out?"

"I took my gun. I waited until dark. Then I went to Ben Gurion's house. But there was such a long queue waiting to shoot him that I got disgusted and went home."

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

BOARDERS

Ships That Skip in the Night

LOUIS ZARA

THEY could afford to pay for three rooms. However, flats were hard to find, so they took the six-room flat and closed off the big living room, the dining room, and the front bedroom, and lived in the rest.

The winter was bitter cold. Drafts came in through the windows, under the doors, and even through the floors, for they were over a vacant basement. The cook-stove going day and night like an engine could not heat the place. Often Mama Kramer sent the children to play at Uncle Sam's, where the steam heat made it as cozy as in a bakery.

At night she wrapped hot bricks in flannel to drive the chill from their beds. In the morning the window panes wore sheets of white and she had to watch Harry, who pressed his pennies into the frost, and would one day break the glass.

"You can chase wolves in this house!" grumbled Papa Kramer sipping his tea. "It's like an open field."

"If we made a fire in the parlor stove," she proposed, "it would not be like a steppe."

He sighed. "To feed *that* stove you should be a capitalist."

"There's a way," she insisted.

He was silent. That way he loathed. Then Harry and Dave caught colds, and they had to have a fire in the parlor stove, so he gave in.

"I will have nothing to do with them!" he glowered. He was ashamed to have it said that they took in boarders.

"You will not have to say even a word to them."

"And no cooking, no washing. You're not a servant. A bed you can give. If they need more let them take their bundles and go."

"But they haven't come yet!" She added, "Today I'll put a 'To Let' in the window."

The placard read in large black letters: "Room—To Let." She placed it in the front room window.

BEFORE noon she had her first applicant, a short, bearded gentleman with small gold-rimmed spectacles and a Prince Albert coat.

He inspected the room gravely and kneaded the mattress. "You are honest people?" he smiled. He had a red little mouth in the black bush of hair.

"Oh, we are honest!"

"And the rent?"

"Four dollars a week."

He smoothed the band of his black fedora. "Ten dollars a month, and in the early morning a pot of hot tea."

She hesitated. "For boarders I do no cooking."

READERS of this department will remember LOUIS ZARA's story, "The Peanut Machine and the Kramers" (January 1950), a study of the impact of the machine on a Jewish family. Here the Kramers appear again, this time entangled with a somewhat more traditional challenge to the inner well-being and security of the Jewish home — boarders, those highly individualized yet somehow typical "sports" and mavericks of the Jewish strain. Mr. Zara is the author of numerous short stories and several novels, of which the most recent is *Ruth Middleton* (1946). He is an editor with the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company and is secretary of the Chicago Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League. He was born in New York City.

“I'll bring my own tea,” he offered amiably. “The hot water you will not refuse me.”

Reluctantly she agreed. “But don't tell the Mister.”

“Ha, there's a Mister, too?”

“I am not a widow. . . . But tell me from where comes your money?”

“From grown children. I have a lawyer-son, and a doctor-son, and a daughter who is married to a manufacturer of hairpins—the name you have heard: Goldfarb.”

“Oh, yes!” One hears many names. His own was Zalman.

He moved in that evening, barely nodded to Papa Kramer, and retired to his room.

During the night Mama Kramer heard keening sounds, probably from outside.

In the morning she fetched her samovar tray with a teapot of boiling water and a glass, spoon, and saucer to the boarder's door.

“Come in!” he called.

She entered and stood stockstill. Sitting up in bed, with a blue velvet jacket about his shoulders and a black skullcap on his head, was Mr. Zalman. But on the quilt before him sprawled two fat tortoise-shell cats.

“From where did they come?” she gasped.

He beamed. “Rachel and Leah! I go nowhere without them. The one with the white paws is Rachel, the other is Leah.”

She was dumbfounded. “Cats in the house I never had.”

“If there are mice you will thank God.”

“There are no mice. I keep a clean house.”

Calmly he reached for the tray. He opened a red canister and measured out a spoonful of tea.

“Ah, I forgot sugar, Mrs. Kramer, a few pieces hard sugar.”

She hastened to bring the sugar. In the kitchen she realized that the cats had followed her. She paused. They were sniffing at the icebox. Her heart was touched. “Rachel and Leah,” she thought. “A pair.” And she poured them saucers of milk.

The tortoise-shells lapped greedily.

“MR. ZALMAN, the cats—I don't know.”

“Why?” he asked innocently. He had arisen and was yawning lazily.

“A landlady for cats! The Mister—”

“So don't tell the Mister. You never kept a secret from the Mister?”

An hour later she saw him go out, the cats trailing after him in single file.

Before she could clear her mind he was back carrying grocery packages. He placed them on the kitchen table and mopped his brow. The cats pawed at the legs of the chairs and meowed in chorus.

“Quiet, Rachel! Quiet, Leah! Mrs. Kramer, a pot, and I will start cooking my meat. . . . For them I bought a fish-head.”

Her mouth was agape. “You cook?”

“You'll do it for me? Make a place on the stove. I can cook for myself.”

“But if you cook and stay home—when do you work?”

He fluttered his eyelashes. “I have a lawyer-son, a doctor-son, and a daughter married to a manufacturer. I should work?”

“Then you are home all day?”

“All day!” he replied gaily. “You will have company.”

Her bosom was heaving. “Mr. Zalman, the deal is no deal.”

“Ha!”

“A man doesn't work, a man has cats in the house, a man cooks on my stove, and now a man will be with me all day—”

“So what are you afraid?” he chortled. “An old man—what can I do?”

She put up her hand. “Enough, Mr. Zalman. I don't want to hear. Take the cats and go.”

He surveyed her cunningly. “You are afraid.”

“Go to your sons, the lawyer, the doctor. Go to your daughter. Live by the manufacturer. Yes, I am afraid.”

“I cannot live by the children with the cats,” he pleaded.

“Mr. Zalman, I don't want to hear. My Mister'll be home, and from his anger the heavens will open.”

The boarder stroked his beard. “I haven't done you anything.”

“Don't do me anything. Take the cats and go.”

“And the money?”

Perspiration broke out on her forehead. He had paid in advance. Fortunately she had saved the money for the rent. “When you go, I'll give you the money.”

To her relief he argued no more. He returned to his room and began to pack. The children were dashing in for lunch when he reappeared.

"Missus, ten dollars!"

She counted out the bills.

"So one night I slept for free, with hot water and sugar for tea, and milk for Rachel and Leah."

"You are welcome."

At the door he paused. "To me is worth a dollar more by such a fine woman. I did not even touch a hand—"

She lifted her broom. "Go, Mr. Zalman." She was glad she had forgotten to give him a key.

The little red mouth puckered. "Foolish landlady, goodbye."

Through the curtains she watched him waddling down the street, his grip under his arm, the tortoise-shell cats slinking ahead. Quickly she put the "To Let" back into the window.

She was worried what to tell Avram, but God was good, and by three o'clock she had another boarder, a middle-aged man with a violin case and a dry, racking cough.

"A new one?" Papa Kramer asked. The man moved in shortly after supper.

"Arturo Levy. He teaches on the fiddle."

He glowed. "A little music in the house. What happened to the Beard?"

She studied the noodles on her plate. "Him I sent packing."

He considered the matter soberly. His wife had sent the Beard packing. There must be a reason, perhaps a woman's reason. He prodded no further.

When the violin teacher came in for the night, Mama Kramer led him proudly into the kitchen. "Mr. Levy, I want you should—"

Mr. Levy bowed. He was a little man with furtive eyes. "*Professor* Levy."

"A professor!" Mama Kramer rolled the word on her tongue. One of the children might yet become a Mischa Elman and bring them all prosperity. Sometime the boarder might play the fiddle and delight their hearts.

But after giving lessons all day at the conservatory Professor Levy was too fatigued. Anyway, he paid the rent and was a peaceful soul.

"Lessons is expensive?" she finally inquired.

He rolled his eyes heavenward. "God forbid! Mrs. Kramer, teach them a trade. Let them be good carpenters, shoemakers—"

"My children will not be labor-workers!"

"Then let them open groceries, delicatessens, and sell what people need. Who needs fiddlers?"

"He is jealous," she observed privately. "He is not a Mischa Elman, so he doesn't want Harry and Dave to be Mischa Elmans." She was sorry for him.

Suddenly letters began to arrive for the Professor. Mama Kramer examined them curiously; not one bore the address of the sender. When she handed them to the boarder he became agitated.

"What is it, Professor?"

He fled to his room.

Early Sunday morning the doorbell rang.

Harry raced into the kitchen. "Mama, the Professor's wife. She's coming to take him home!"

Mama Kramer was stunned. So the Professor had a wife! She hastened to greet the woman.

Mrs. Professor Levy was a tall, stout person in a black sealskin coat and a seal-trimmed hat. Deep-set beady eyes flashed from either side of her imperious nose.

"Where do you hide him?" she shrilled. "Send home my man!" She saw Papa Kramer, his newspaper in his hands, gawking at her, and became gentle. "Where is he?"

They led her to the front bedroom.

Mama Kramer would have knocked, but the woman thrust her aside and marched in. They heard the Professor gasp; then the door shut.

"Harry! Dave! Go play!" Mama Kramer commanded. Avram had already gone back to his reading. She lingered in the front rooms to dust the furniture.

"Poor, poor soul!" she soon reported. "She cries, 'Come home!' and he says 'No!' She cries, 'A shame!' and he says he can't stand it."

"What is it?"

"They have a daughter. She sings."

"Is that a reason to run away?"

"I'll go listen—"

"Stay here!"

Forty minutes passed before they heard the bedroom door open. The Professor shuffled to the kitchen, his violin case under his arm. Behind him loomed the seal-trimmed hat.

"Goodbye!" said the boarder, his lips

quivering. "You have been kind to me, a stranger. Now I go."

They wanted to ask, "Why?" But the woman twitched at his sleeve and he went before her. The street door slammed behind them.

"Why does such a man run away from home?" Mama Kramer pondered.

"Why?" Avram retorted. "What man hasn't wanted to run away from home?"

She looked up sharply. The rejoinder sizzled on the tip of her tongue. A husband talks. She went to place the "To Let" in the window again.

THE next evening when Papa Kramer called "Supper ready?" she beamed her greeting. Something had happened, for the parlor stove glowed and the sliding doors to the dining room were pushed open. Still if there was something to tell, she would tell him.

"Caught a pike!" she declared, serving the meat-and-carrots *tsimmes*.

"A pike!"

"A journalist."

"What would a journalist want with us?" he frowned. "They make big money. Are there no hotels?'

"A poet!"

He gazed thoughtfully at a crack in the ceiling.

"A handsome, fine man with red hair and such shined shoes. He comes in the evening."

He shrugged. "Washing? Cooking?"

"I said no washing, no cooking, only a bed and a nice home."

"Strangers I don't want at my table. If they need a piece of bread, that's different."

"His satchel is here. Books and papers, too."

He rubbed his chin. "He will need a key."

"From the locksmith. Ten cents."

"He is honest?"

She blinked. "He left his gold ring on the dresser."

Sighing that it was a matter of utter indifference to him, Papa Kramer followed her.

She entered the bedroom; he would not cross the threshold. She fondled the ring. "Solid gold."

"Am I a jeweler?"

"Hold it in the hand."

"I don't touch what doesn't belong."

She crimsoned and dropped it on the dresser. "The big satchel is under the bed."

He nodded—good leather—and retreated. "The man will come in and find us standing like secret police."

At nine o'clock the front door opened.

"The boarder," she whispered.

He lowered his head over his newspaper. When Mama Kramer led the stranger in, his gaze was riveted upon the print.

"Avram!" she called gently and, in an aside to the man, "This is my Mister . . . Avram . . . Mr. Rockoff."

Papa Kramer paled and lifted his head. He rose awkwardly to accept the handshake.

"Happy to make your acquaintance," said the boarder.

Papa Kramer stood tongue-tied. Finally he mumbled "Welcome!" and sat down. Quickly Mama Kramer ushered the man out.

When they had retired she said, "A good word you couldn't speak to him?"

He scowled. "'Welcome!' I said, 'Welcome!'"

"A stranger in the house. One could offer to drink his health."

"*You* drink his health," he offered.

"Me? I am not a drinker."

"I don't want him to think we don't know how to go around people."

"Sleep, sleep!" She tried to calm him. "He's not thinking of us. He's reading a book."

He settled under the quilt. "Reading all night will be a big electric bill."

THE boarder came, the boarder went; Papa Kramer had nothing to do with him. Mr. Rockoff came home after supper was over, and remained in his room until after the man of the house had left for his work.

Mama Kramer, however, reported warmly on his doings. "He writes for journals."

"He sits in his room and writes, and they pay?" Avram cocked an eyebrow.

"He's not a Rockefeller to give away."

"Rockefeller doesn't give away either. A dime maybe. How does he make a living?"

"He's a poet, he makes rhymes."

"From this he makes a living?" He shook his head. "'Day' and 'hay,' 'night' and 'right'?"

"An educated man. People like that can bring together one wall with another."

Papa Kramer thought of his own daily toil. "I would like to see."

"And if you saw? You are an expert?"

He pursed his lips. "I am not blind. I can read a word."

By the end of the third week he observed that she no longer spoke of the boarder.

"Goldie, the rent he pays?"

She studied her fingertips.

He raised his voice. "The rent he pays?"

"I am not worried."

"You are not worried! Then I am worried."

"For one week he paid."

"He has been three weeks."

"The journals pay slow," she said timidly.

"But the light burns in his room half the night, and the fire in the parlor stove goes all night."

She looked at him humbly, and he returned to his paper.

The following Saturday night the boarder again failed to pay his rent. The Kramers discussed it soberly.

"If he has no money, where does the man eat?"

"He eats in restaurants."

His eyes flashed. "For restaurants he has money?"

But neither knew what to do. "He cannot cook in the bedroom," they agreed.

Sunday morning Harry and Dave were reaching for the last bagels for their lox when Mr. Rockoff entered the kitchen. Papa Kramer, who was wearing a white shirt but no collar, felt ill at ease. The other was wearing a necktie and his suit-coat.

Mr. Rockoff paused on the threshold. He surveyed the little family over the late breakfast. "Good morning! I smelled the coffee, the smoked fish—it pressed on my heart like at my own mother's."

"Good morning!" said Mama Kramer. She scratched at the oilcloth to prompt her husband.

"Good morning," he grumbled and suddenly found the editorial in the Sunday *Forward.*

"Perhaps a cup coffee?"

Instantly Mama Kramer gave up her chair. "Sit, sit! Coffee, bread and butter, eggs. No more bagels but a piece lox, a slice cream cheese."

"No, no, only coffee."

They could not be inhospitable. She began to make conversation, and Papa Kramer had to clear his throat and unwrinkle his brow.

"Such a cup coffee!"

"In restaurants it's expensive," she sympathized.

"For a plain roll and coffee, ten cents."

She clucked. "Try the lox. Today it's not salty."

"Eat!" said Papa Kramer. "I was a soldier as a young man, and I used to eat by strangers, and I was not ashamed."

Mr. Rockoff beamed and waved the hand with the gold ring. "I could tell you—" But he couldn't, for he was occupied with bread and butter, two boiled eggs, a slice of lox, half a smoked chub, the cream cheese, and a large cup of coffee, into which he poured three teaspoons of sugar.

"What does it say in the paper?" he asked cheerily.

Papa Kramer smiled shyly. "The news is not good. The world spins till the head aches."

The boarder hooked his thumbs in his armpits. "I have written such things, too. Lies!"

The other frowned. "I am reading this paper twenty years—"

"All lies!" With that he turned and pinched Harry's cheek. "A nice boy."

At once Harry left. Dave followed him.

"I wish I had children," Mr. Rockoff sighed.

"You're not married? You're still a boy?"

He became solemn. "God has not sent the right girl."

Mama Kramer's eyes gleamed. "There are plenty girls and widows that need a good man."

"If one could find a girl with a few dollars—" He shrugged. "People owe me so much money. I cannot be too hard and strip the clothes off their backs."

"There's the baker's daughter Peshe. What her father would not give to see her settled in a good home! I could say something. For a poet they would give away their last pillow."

He licked his lips. "I would like to see this Peshe. And, Mrs. Kramer, if all went well, you should have a gift."

"No, no. I want to see a Jewish daughter married."

"I would insist. At least a hundred dollars."

She blinked. What she could not do with a hundred dollars!

"Meantime, if I could borrow five dollars—"

Papa Kramer started, but she had already picked up her purse. "I'll see. . . . Five I haven't got. But three if you could use."

He reached for the bills. "I am pressed." He pocketed the money. "But this is between us. The hundred dollars is extra."

That emboldened Papa Kramer. "Your rhymes I would like to hear."

Mr. Rockoff smiled. "Why not?" He threw his head back and began to declaim: "To be or not to be, that is the question. Whether it is nobler to. . . ."

When he had finished the Kramers glowed at each other. They had never heard anyone read poetry before. Mr. Rockoff bowed and returned to his room.

"Good to hear a fine word," Papa Kramer declared soberly. "But money he shouldn't borrow. He is a boarder, not a relative."

"I am not sorry," she countered fiercely. "Did you hear the rhymes? The man thinks of taking his own life, God forbid! What is three dollars against a man's life?"

The following Saturday evening Mr. Rockoff did not speak of the rent. But he borrowed another three dollars and declaimed to Mama Kramer: "Friends, Romans, countrymen. I come to bury Caesar not to praise him. . . ."

"That man," she confided to Avram, "could be a preacher or a teacher. It's a pleasure."

"He should talk to the children," Papa Kramer mused. "My head after a day's work is not for rhymes. They could learn."

"Mr. Rockoff," she accosted the boarder, "the Mister says maybe you would give the children a little rhymes."

He was thoughtful. "Why not?" He pulled a paper from his pocket. "Mrs. Kramer, a man has for me three hundred dollars, but he wants a receipt. To sign it there must be a witness. You sign it."

She crimsoned at the fine print. "I do not write."

"The Mister?"

"I'll tell him."

When she approached Avram he frowned. "For him to get money I should sign?"

"A witness."

He peered at the small type. "Printed! So many words to make a receipt?"

"Avram, sign!"

"Let me read," he pouted. "Who knows?" He puzzled over the lines. "When he gets the money he will pay what he owes?"

She shrugged. "When he has money he'll pay."

"He says so?"

"What a man you are!" she exploded.

"I did not ask *him* to sign. He asks *me* to sign. So is it wrong to ask a question?"

"Ask, ask."

"If he'll pay—six weeks already—I'll sign."

"First you sign, then he'll pay."

"First he pays." Idly he turned the sheet over. "More words!" He placed one finger to his nose. "Something here—"

"What?"

He scratched his chin. "A man comes for a boarder. He doesn't pay the rent. He borrows money. Then he brings papers to sign. . . . When the children come home let them read."

She was annoyed but dared not argue when he became stubborn. As soon as Harry appeared she ushered him to his father. "Read the paper."

Harry scanned it and whistled. "Three hundred dollars!"

"Read."

The youngster could only stumble over the words.

Papa Kramer furrowed his brow. "Say, is it kosher?"

But Harry could not tell.

"So what?" Mama Kramer asked. "Is it a chicken or meat to be kosher? The man waits."

"This pike is not fresh," Avram wrinkled his nose. "My foreman went to night school. He will know."

In the morning Mr. Rockoff addressed his landlady. "The paper. The Mister signed?"

She was embarrassed. "He didn't understand. He will show his boss."

His face fell. "I am right in the house. Why didn't he ask me?"

She avoided his disapproving eyes.

"I am ready to make a match with Peshe. I am like one of the family. I read rhymes, I borrow money—"

"Yes, yes!" She found her voice. "It's already twelve dollars cash and six weeks' rent. We are not rich people—"

He put his hand on her shoulder. "Mrs. Kramer, a promise. After tonight you will have no more worries. Everything will be clear."

She smiled happily. "Tomorrow then?"

"Tomorrow."

When Papa Kramer came home, she waited for him to speak, but he was grimly self-important. From the set of his mouth she knew he would not talk until it suited him. So the whole meal was conducted in gloom.

Finally he asked, "You have heard from the boarder?"

"Tomorrow he will pay."

"Tomorrow!" He began to chuckle. "This man will pay tomorrow?" He guffawed, and his shoulders shook. He rocked back and forth. His mirth, at first simulated, fed on itself and became hysterical laughter. "To-oo-morr-row!" he gasped. Tears ran down his cheeks.

"Avram!" she pleaded. "Avram, why are you laughing?"

"For my money I can laugh!" he retorted. "Where is he, the poet?"

"He is not home yet."

"We'll wait for him," he promised.

Nine o'clock passed, and then ten. At ten-thirty Papa Kramer yawned. At eleven he could wait no longer and wound the clock.

"Maybe something happened."

He grinned. "Your bird has flown."

She clapped her hand to her heart. "What are you saying?"

"He will not be back."

"How can you say that?"

"Because the paper he wants me to sign is a note from a loan company."

She trembled. "From a loan company?"

"Yeah. They would give three hundred dollars if he had a signer. Then he would run away, and who would pay?"

"He would pay?"

"No, I would pay."

"And where, Avram, would you get three hundred dollars?"

He shrugged and set the alarm.

But she could not rest. She dashed into the front bedroom. A book was lying on the bed. A single glance told her that Avram was right. The dresser had been emptied. She looked under the bed. The satchel was gone. She peered into the closet.

"He took one of my best towels!"

"A towel!" he grimaced. "And the money he borrowed, and six weeks' rent?"

Her heart would not be stilled. "What should we do?"

He shrugged. "You wanted boarders! And now he's gone—and where is his key?"

The whole night she tossed, listening for the door. Would he come back? He still had a key. That Mr. Rockoff, who had written such eloquent rhymes, should have tried to swindle them! Yet he *had* fled, and they *had* lost the money he had borrowed cash, and the rent he owed—and also the hundred dollars which she surely would have earned had he made the match with the baker's daughter.

When she awoke her eyelids were red, but she had learned her lesson. The next time she would be more careful. No more fiddlers, no more poets, and no more retired men with beards. She would take ordinary persons, as long as they paid their rent and minded their own business.

She looked for the "To Let" sign. *Gone!* Surely Mr. Rockoff would not have taken *that.* Again she went to his room. The sign was not there, but she found the key, and that made her happy.

"Avram, have you seen the 'To Let'?" she asked at supper.

He spoke with great deliberation. "I tore it—from end to end—into little pieces."

She sat back. *"Nu!"*

"Goldie, the days are getting warmer. The colds are over. Let the fire in the parlor stove go out."

She was silent.

"For what do we need boarders?" he went on kindly. "To make work for you? So we'll be alone again, and no strange feet to walk around in the house."

She brightened. "The book he left—Harry says every page is rhymes."

"Fine, fine!" he consoled her. "Then the children will read."

She was bemused for so long that he thought she had catnapped. She was wondering whether she ought to tell him that Harry had found Mr. Rockoff's rhymes in the book and that they had been written, not by the boarder, but by William Shakespeare, an Englishman.

"So what are you worrying about?" he finally prodded.

She lifted her head. "Who would have believed it, Avram? Such a fine-looking man, and he took away my good towel!"

CEDARS OF LEBANON

YOUTH OF A BUNDIST

A Jewish Labor Leader Recalls His Beginnings

VLADIMIR MEDEM

VLADIMIR MEDEM, born of assimilated Russian Jewish parents in Minsk in 1879 and baptized at birth in the Greek Orthodox Church, devoted his life wholly to the cause of the Jewish labor movement in the ranks of the Bund (General Jewish Labor Bund), the Jewish Socialist party founded in 1897.

The Bund developed in underground channels in czarist Russia and its Polish and Lithuanian dependencies. With the bolshevization of Russia and the disenfranchisement of the Bund there, the new republic of Poland, established in 1918, became the center of Bund activity. During the twenty-one years of Polish independence, the Bund exerted a profound influence in all areas of Jewish life. The Jewish trade union movement in Poland was largely under Bund control; a ramified Yiddish school system from kindergarten through teacher-training institutes grew up under its aegis. In later years, Bund representatives gained majorities in local Jewish communal bodies and spoke for the majority of the Jewish voters in municipal governments. The civic defense of the Jewish community of Poland and the struggle against discrimination were largely conducted by the Bund in cooperation with Polish Socialists.

MEDEM developed as a political personality during the period of conspiratorial revolutionary activity in czarist Russia. He was arrested several times and was frequently forced to seek refuge abroad, usually in Switzerland, where he came into contact with various leaders of the Russian revolutionary movements: Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, and many others. Shortly before the outbreak of World War I, Medem was arrested in Russia and imprisoned. In 1915, he was released from a Warsaw dungeon when the Russians fled before the Imperial German Army. Medem remained in Warsaw until 1920 as a member of the Central Committee of the Bund; during these five years he became one of the most popular labor leaders among Eastern European Jews.

His poor health, combined with internal party differences, caused him to leave Poland in 1921 and to come to the United States, where he retired from public life and devoted much of his time to writing his memoirs. On January 9, 1923, Medem died of a kidney disease in New York and was buried in the cemetery of the Workmen's Circle. His tombstone bears, in Yiddish, the inscription: "Vladimir Medem, legend of the Jewish labor movement."

By constant study of, and immersion in, things Jewish, Medem came to know a great deal about Jewish history and customs, Jewish thought and politics. He learned Yiddish so well that established Yiddish writers declared his style impeccable. During his work with the Bund in Warsaw, he turned his attention increasingly to the educational and cultural aspects of the Bund's program, especially in the area of the Yiddish secular school. Steeped in Jewish history and politics, Medem was, even in the consistently anti-Zionist Bund, one of the most outspoken critics of political Zionism, and in his journalistic work he frequently attacked Zionist parties for drawing the attention of Polish Jewry away from the immediate, local struggle to improve their status.

Because of his unique personal history as one who had "returned to the fold," and because of his selfless devotion to the party, the austerity of his personal life, his gentleness, modesty, and integrity, Medem even during his lifetime attained a stature considerably greater than that of most contemporary political leaders. His death grieved Jewish workers the world over; tens of thousands of Jewish laborers braved a raging snowstorm to join his funeral procession. Memorial meetings were held in many cities throughout the world. But especially it was the

Jewish workers of Poland who, in every Jewish community of that country, left their factories and workshops in the middle of the day to assemble in the greatest manifestation of sorrow ever aroused by a Jewish political figure.

The following selections have been freely translated from the two volumes of Medem's unfinished autobiography, *Fun Mein Leben* (published in Yiddish, New York, 1923).

—Lucy S. Dawidowicz

MY MOTHER sits in the dining room. Before her stands a little old woman. I remember her name was Leyeh or, as she was called in our house, Leykeh. My mother sits, Leykeh stands, and they don't stop talking for a moment. I don't remember what they talked about, but I do remember that they spoke Yiddish.

I, a child of six or seven, hover near my mother. I hear Leykeh calling her "dear Madame," I hear my mother replying in "jargon" [Yiddish], and I am beside myself with anger. Who ever heard of such a thing: an intelligent, educated woman, the wife of a Russian general, speaking "jargon"? I can hardly wait for my father to come home. Such goings-on aren't allowed in his presence. And indeed, when my father is heard coming, Leykeh disappears hastily into the kitchen. I breathe more freely. Our home is once again truly Russian.

Leykeh used to come to our house every Friday to make Jewish-style fish. True, it wasn't for Friday night suppers as in Jewish homes, but for Friday dinner. Nevertheless, it was a relic of old Jewish times, a trace of vanished Jewishness. Such traces became less and less frequent from year to year. Our house was increasingly becoming really Russian, not only in language, but in the full content of our lives.

Both my parents were Jews by birth, real honest-to-goodness Jews. I think that my father was even a *kohen*. He came from Shavli (Kovno region) and had settled in Minsk; my mother came from Vilna. I never met my paternal grandparents, but I know that my father's generation was stricken by conversion, as was my mother's family. Practically all my uncles and aunts were Christians and some of their children did not even know of their Jewish origin.

To understand this, we must remember that this epidemic of conversion began much earlier. My father, for example, was born in 1836. As a boy he studied in a Russian Gymnasium and later attended the St. Petersburg military medical academy. When he was graduated he became an army doctor and established himself in a Russian environment. He had left traditional Jewishness very early, if he had ever known it. Insofar as he had any contact with Jewish life, it was permeated with assimilationist leanings. In the 60's, the springtide of Alexander II's regime, the attitude toward Jews was liberal, and the Jewish community responded ardently in its desire to fuse with the Russian people.

Then came a shift in events. The political honeymoon ended and was replaced by years of reaction, pogroms, and anti-Semitism, especially when Alexander III ascended the throne. With political persecution also went social rejection of the Jews. The situation had changed. No matter how hard one had tried to forget one's former Jewishness, the outside world refused to allow it. "You are a Jew" became an insult, a detraction. And the Jew then began to feel ashamed of his Jewishness.

This shame about Jewishness and the desire to conceal one's Jewish origin was typical for our milieu. I remember how, in my childhood, my family was speaking about someone: is it known or not known that he is a Jew? I remember that some of our relatives strictly prohibited the use of the word "Jew," lest the servants hear. A sort of code was developed which only the family could understand. Instead of using the word "Jew," they said "Italian" or "our kind." In our house, the shame of Jewishness never reached this absurdity, but the same atmosphere prevailed. I myself, as a young child, was completely acclimated to it. My Jewish origin was a burden. It was a shame, a degradation, a sort of secret disease about which no one should know. And if people did know, then, if they were kind and friendly, they took no notice of it, just as one ignores the deformity of a hunchback so as not to hurt him.

This is why I used to become upset when my mother spoke Yiddish to old Leykeh. Every word reminded me of the ugly disease: you are a Jew, a cripple. I did not want to be a Jew, I did not consider myself a Jew, and I used to prattle in imitation of the grownups: we are Russians.

This was the atmosphere of our circle and it led to conversion as the final and drastic cure for the secret disease. Actually, conversion was no more than a formality, the last rung of the ladder. My parents did not take this step until quite late. My father became converted at the age of fifty-six, a few months before his death. He was one of the most distinguished citizens of our city, a division doctor, a *statski sovetnik,* a rank between colonel and general. He could not become a full general because he was a Jew. But that was not why he became converted. As I understood it (I was about thirteen years old then), new restrictions against Jewish officials had been introduced, and my father's position was endangered. Since he had no private practice, was old and sick, and could not possibly dream of beginning his career anew, he decided to join the Lutheran Church.

My mother became a Christian a short while later, soon after my father's death. She was very sick, and we children convinced her that her conversion had been our father's desire. She gave in unwillingly and with considerable distress.

At that time, all the children were Christians. My sister had become converted together with my father in order to marry a Russian. My oldest brother had long been an army officer and, necessarily, a Christian. Two other brothers had been converted, but it was spoken of so little that I don't even remember when. Oddly enough, all became Lutherans, as did most Jews who joined the Christian church. I believe it was because conversion to Protestantism involved less ceremonial and fewer technical difficulties than Orthodoxy. Thus, our whole family gradually became Lutherans. Only I was an exception—I belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church.

I was the first Christian in our family, even though I was the youngest. When I was born (July 1879), my parents decided: we have suffered enough because of our Jewishness; let our youngest not know such sufferings. And I was baptized in a Greek Orthodox church just as if I had been born into an Orthodox family, while they themselves remained Jews for a long time.

Thus, I was a Greek Orthodox child, reared in a Jewish, later a half-Lutheran, and finally a wholly Lutheran family. I never felt any inconsistency between my Orthodoxy and the Jewishness around me. Actually, I was for a long time convinced that my father had become converted much earlier than he had in fact. In our home all the Russian church holidays were observed. On official festivals my father even used to go to church, so that I never felt any barrier to the full and free development of my religious feeling.

I was about five when I first went to church. It made a great impression on me: the dark gold holy pictures, the glowing lights and candles, the somber mien of the priests in their extraordinarily beautiful vestments, the mysterious ceremonies, the vibrant bass of the proto-deacon, the singing of the choir. It is indeed hard to describe the full beauty of Russian church music with its earnest and sublime harmony.

But as I grew older, my religious emotions, based on externals rather than conscious religious awareness, began to dissipate, and when I reached my second year in Gymnasium, I began to develop critical attitudes. During my last years in Gymnasium, my circle gradually and imperceptibly turned Jewish. The adults who visited us were still mostly Russian, but the friends with whom I associated were almost exclusively Jews. One was Alexander Eliasberg, the son of well-to-do Jews, who himself had already traveled, read much, and who influenced my taste in art and literature. Another was Yasha Kaplan. I used to visit him quite often, and there I found an unmistakably lower-middle-class Jewish house. Eliasberg's home was Jewish too; his family observed Jewish customs, so much so that he was afraid even to ride on the Sabbath lest they find out. But I hardly ever saw his family. With Kaplan's family, it was different: the home was more sociable, more familiar. A portrait of Baron de Hirsch adorned a wall; Yiddish was heard frequently. Once, I remember, some people came and sang Yiddish songs, some by Goldfaden, I think. By that time the sound of Yiddish no longer pained my ears.

There were other Jewish boys with whom I was friendly and who visited me. At home, my Jewish acquaintanceships did not pass without comment. My older brother used to joke good-naturedly about it. He would say, "Go on, one of your Ginsbergs has come; I don't know whether Kaplan or Eliasberg." But it was no more than a joke; no one disturbed my friendships.

At that time, I had two other Jewish friends of a different sort, not fellow students. They were sons of a Jewish storekeeper who had his shop in the yard of our house. All day the boys played in the yard until their mother drove them inside. When I outgrew the games, I turned to "education." I decided to teach them Russian, hygiene, and gentility.

Yet even though I made friends with more and more Jews, I cannot definitely say that I began to consider myself a Jew. The question of my own Jewishness was not yet posed.

In 1897, I enrolled in the University of Kiev. During this year, I learned about Karl Marx and his *Capital* from Yasha Kaplan. I used to consider socialists a group of dreamers who with fantastic plans and bombs and riots sought to change the order of the world. Now I learned there was another kind of socialism, not a fantasy nor a dream, but a logical and necessary product of human development. The next year I began to study political economy, and a little later I met real live Marxists and learned the name of the Bund.

Besides studying Marx, I decided to learn Hebrew. But my interest in Hebrew was literary rather than Jewish. I wanted to read the Bible in the original. I did not consider the Bible a Jewish book, for, after all, it had been part of the Christian religious teaching I had had as a child. At home during the summer vacation, I did not have to search far for a teacher. Mitche, the older of the two boys who lived in our yard, agreed to teach me in exchange for Russian lessons. We began with Genesis. He taught me the alphabet and pronunciation. He did not have to translate because the Bible we used, one that my father had cherished, had a French translation. We used to sit in the yard and read aloud. But I wanted to study with system and I asked Mitche to teach me grammar. He began to tell me about *dikduk*, but I suspect that Mitche himself didn't understand very well what it was. His reputation as a Hebraist fell in my eyes. I never did learn Hebrew, but I did accomplish something: I learned the alphabet, gaining the key to the Yiddish language. I read very poorly at that time, but the first step had been made.

When I returned to the university, I became active in the student movement. My political work increased my homesickness for Jewishness. Even though no distinction as to Jew or Christian was made among the students, there was one specifically Jewish institution among them—the Jewish student kitchen. Actually, I don't recall that I had ever been there. It was not merely an eating place; it was an intellectual gathering place, a kind of club for the Jewish students. At first I had paid no attention to it, but getting back from a visit home, I felt something akin to envy. I saw that my Jewish friends had their own group from which I was excluded. It was as though I stood before a closed door that shut me out from warmth and hominess. I felt homeless, and longed for a home. This home was Jewish life. This feeling of envy was a sign that I was still on the wrong side of the door, that I still did not consider myself Jewish. But also it was an expression of an awakening desire to become one of those to whom I was drawn.

In various ways and for various reasons, I began to turn to Jewishness. Here I should mention my friendship with Isaac Teumin, a man considerably older than I, who had read and seen much, been to America, Switzerland, seen the world, been imprisoned, and was associated with the Jewish labor movement. Teumin was a person with strong Jewish feeling. He came from a traditional Jewish family, knew Jewish life intimately, and loved it. This love communicated itself to me.

I was in Minsk during the summer and early fall of 1899. On Yom Kippur, Teumin took me to the synagogue. I remember that evening well. Earlier, I had wandered through the streets. Minsk is a Jewish city and the stores were closed, the streets empty and desolate. I recall the figure of a Russian hussar, in a light green coat and raspberry trousers with silver band, and a long sword. His strange figure in the empty streets enhanced the extraordinarily solemn appearance of the city. A gray dusk hung over a gray quiet. You could feel that the day was different from other days.

Later Teumin and I went to the synagogue. I had been to a synagogue before, but that had been the large, new-style synagogue in Kiev, with its Western architectural style, its choir, and its rich Jews in top hats. Now for the first time I entered an old-fashioned synagogue.

First we went to the large synagogue and immediately I felt the presence of a new, hitherto unknown atmosphere in all its uniqueness and magic. It was different from the Russian church. There, the large mass of people stood quiet, grave, and silent, and only the priest and the choir spoke and sang on behalf of the congregation, spoke and sang in lovely, carefully harmonic and measured tones. But here, it was as though I had fallen among torrential waves. Hundreds upon hundreds of worshipers—each one taking his own case to God, each in a loud voice with passionate eagerness. Hundreds of voices ascended to the heavens, each for himself, without concord, without harmony, yet all joining together in one tremendous clamorous sound. No matter how strange to the Western ear, it makes a deep impression and has a great beauty derived from the passion of mass feeling.

Afterwards, we went to a small synagogue; it may have been a Hasidic prayer-room. There too, I was carried away by the passionate stream of hundreds of voices. Above the vast mass rumbling there rose a sharp and high-pitched voice, the voice of the old gray-bearded *baal-tefila*. This was no singing or preaching. It was a lament, a true lament in which you could feel the scorching tears of an anguished heart. There was none of the solemnity or measured harmony of a Christian prayer. It was the true Oriental passion of a suffering soul, a voice from the gray past which wept and beseeched its old age-gray God. In it lay a great beauty.

IN THE fall of 1899, Yasha Kaplan and I were expelled from the University of Kiev for our political activity among the student body and ordered by the police to return to Minsk. It was a foregone conclusion that we would sooner or later join the "movement," the Bund. We had enjoyed the taste of political work and it was clear that our place was in the local movement in Minsk. Even though I had some doubts as to whether the Russian workers were at a stage of readiness to accept socialist doctrines, I was well enough acquainted with the Jewish labor movement to know that its existence was an accomplished fact, and that there could be no doubt about its survival. In the winter of 1899-1900, I became a member of the Bund.

At that time, I don't believe I understood the concept of the Bund as a Jewish organization, and its proper role in Jewish life. But, looking back, I realize that Bundist thought on this subject had not yet been clarified; Bundism as an ideology with its own concept of Jewish life and of the Jewish labor movement was still in the process of crystallization. The first formulation of the Bund's Jewish national program was made at the Bund convention of April 1901, when I was in prison. At the time I began working for the party in Minsk, we were still in a period of searching, groping in the dark. The national question was hardly ever discussed in Bundist literature, and what there was of such discussion was inaccessible to me, for I still could not read Yiddish.

I remember once Yasha's coming to ask: "What do you think—are the Jews a nation?" I didn't know what to answer; I had never thought about it. But so far as the Jewish labor movement was concerned, we all recognized it then as a unique and independent movement. I remember a conversation concerning the uniqueness of the Jewish labor movement some time later, in 1901. We were in prison, together in one cell, and behind bars we held a discussion about the quality of our movement. I tried to summarize. Our movement, I said, has two major characteristics. Most of our people are employed in small or very tiny workshops belonging to artisans who themselves work. The second characteristic of our movement is that it consists of Jews, children of the Jewish people. Thus, there are two forces impelling the Jewish worker into our movement: his class feeling, the consciousness that he is a worker who is being exploited, that he wants to fight together with his brothers for a better life; and his Jewish feeling, the consciousness that he is a Jew.

WHAT was my personal Jewishness at that time? My new friends, Jewish workers, used to call me the *goy*, and in externals I was really quite *goyish*. I still had lots of trouble with Yiddish. I could understand it (I had heard it around so much), and my knowledge of German came to my aid. But the Hebrew elements used in Yiddish were strange and presented many difficulties. Nevertheless, I was able to follow the general content of a Yiddish speech. In fact, I even remember that when I heard someone read Peretz's *Der Kranker Yingel,* I understood it very well. But I still could not speak Yiddish. Once I went to visit a worker who happened to be out. I asked his wife in Yiddish when he would come. They were just four simple words, but immediately she had the feeling that a *goy* was speaking and answered me in Russian.

The articles I then wrote in the *Minsker Arbeiter* were written in Russian and then translated into Yiddish. I had already developed some feeling for the Yiddish language and though I wrote in Russian, I used such expressions as readily lent themselves to Yiddish translation. I could not read Yiddish either at the time, but I was learning.

Certainly the Jewish labor milieu influenced me greatly. I cannot say exactly how this influence expressed itself, but the constant association with Jews and Jewish life Judaized me. An especially strong influence was my friendship with Teumin.

I remember one evening when we went walking together through the Jewish quarter, in the outlying poor little streets with their poor little houses. It was Friday night; the streets were quiet and empty; the Sabbath candles burned in the little houses. We were talking about Jewish things. I don't remember the subject, but I do recall that I was strongly impressed by that unique charm of the peaceful Friday nights and felt a romantic association with the Jewish past, a warm, intimate closeness that one has with one's own past. And this feeling for the past has always remained associated with the small houses and quiet streets of a Lithuanian Jewish town. My sentiment for Jewry was always, as a Zionist might express it, a *galut* feeling. The palm trees and the vineyards of Palestine were alien to me. I think this is an indication that my Jewishness was really an ingrained living Jewishness, not a literary fancy.

As I have said, I cannot exactly determine how this "nationalizing" influence of the Jewish labor circles expressed itself. It was the quiet effect of day-to-day living. This life became dear and important to me. It was Jewish and it drew me into its environs. When did I clearly and definitely feel myself to be a Jew? I cannot say, but at the beginning of 1901, when I was arrested for clandestine political activity, the police gave me a form to fill in. In the column "Nationality," I wrote "Jew."

ON THE HORIZON

SHALOM, HABIBI!

New York's Israeli Night Club

J. L. TELLER

THE owner of the Skazka, a Russian night club on West 46th Street in New York, recently gave his patrons food for thought, with no extra charge. He effaced the ferocious-visaged high-kicking sword-swallowing Cossacks on the murals of his basement establishment and replaced them with silhouettes of minarets and meandering uphill alleys, painted in the buff-color of Mediterranean rock. He then wished Godspeed to his gypsy dancers with their ample bosoms and dangling Woolworth's earrings, unfrocked his waiters of their *rubashkes,* had his five-piece band play *horas* in place of *kazatskes,* engaged new entertainers, some of whom are real Israelis, and painted a new name, Habibi, on the awning. Thus was born New York's first Israeli night club, even though the soul of Russia still whimpers from the menu through shashlik and vodka (re-named "Vodka Collins," possibly to deflect the suspicions of the authors of *Red Channels*).

"Habibi," the master of ceremonies explains, speaking a medley of Yiddish, Hebrew, and exhibitionist poor English, is the Hebrew for "darling." Actually, he was simplifying somewhat. The word can also take on the meaning of "honey" in the unctuous, noncommittal inflection of an Israeli Tallulah Bankhead. Other meanings are "pal," and even "listen here, smart aleck," depending on who addresses whom. However, it was clear that visitors to the club preferred their new Hebrew vocabulary without complication. So, in this time and this place, Habibi means darling. Nor does one's introduction to the genius of Hebrew stop there. Painted over the interior entrance, as you descend the stairs into this new Israeli annex of Broadway night life, is the word "Shalom," a word you hear quickly repeated, in true Linguaphone fashion, in the native voice of a German-accented host, the former manager of Café Pilz on Tel Aviv's boardwalk.

Your Hebrew lesson begins in earnest as you turn to reading the menu. Printed in Hebrew letters, alongside some of the courses, is the Hebrew equivalent for the English word. Appetizer is *manah rishona,* which translated literally means: first course. Soup is *marak.* Listed between chicken consommé and onion soup *au gratin* is Ukrainian borscht, which although good is not indisputably a soup. *Beitzim* (eggs) is the poker-faced translation of Eggs and Omelettes. Only way down the list do you come across a native, not naturalized, Israeli course—*falafel,* "crisp spiced vegetable balls," and still further down, *khoumouss,* "spiced pashette of chick peas," eaten by sabras, Yemenites, and Kurds, but generally shunned by the East European adult.

Israel being an assembly of the dispersed, Habibi's claim to being an Israeli restaurant could not be impeached even if the menu included chow mein. In any case, the Oedi-

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LACKING a regular night-club editor, COMMENTARY drafted J. L. TELLER, who has, so he assured us, a more than reportorial interest in night life, and assigned him to visit Habibi, New York's new—and only—Israeli night club. Mr. Teller writes regularly for the Israeli press on matters American, and for American periodicals on matters Israeli. He is also on the staff of the American Jewish Congress.

pus complex of the Israeli pioneer does not include Diaspora cooking among the targets of his homicidal wish-dreams. The dominant note on Habibi's solemn menu is set by *vareniki* (for the Skazka's soul goes wandering on), ***kreplach, kneidlach mit neshomes*** (specialty of the house), Wiener schnitzel, and cutlet Kiev.

Skip the cocktails, scotch, rye, and bourbon, if you seek a native Israeli drink. The sabra, nourished on milk and weaned on spring water, would be surprised to learn his favorite drink is the sabra cocktail, a drink about the size of a Zombie, combining Oriental spices and French liqueurs, and served flaming. The wine list includes some of Rishon l'Zion's best, but why have the excellent Israeli cordials been omitted, Habibi?

HABIBI may claim the honor of being an Israeli night club, and indeed there are actually many such in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem. However, the blunt truth is that night clubs in Israel are extra-territorial, patronized exclusively by American tourists, Gentiles, and those who vote to the right of Mapai. A Laborite of any standing would no more be seen in a night club, or even peeping in from the sidewalk, than he would be found applauding a speech by an opposition party. When my colleagues on *Davar,* Israel's Labor daily, threw a modest party at the relatively sumptuous Café Pilz on the newspaper's twenty-fifth anniversary, hoary pioneers were shocked into speechfulness.

No mere puritan streak accounts for this. The true Israeli's pastime is *shmoos* or chat. Still working on a wartime schedule, he is not inclined to squander his rare evening leisure hours listening to a master of ceremonies talking at him. The principle of self-help is extended even to the entertainment field: the Israeli thinks it preposterous to relax at a ringside table while performers exert themselves to make him laugh. In his *kibbutz,* entertainment always involves audience participation; he makes exceptions only of music and theater involving high performer's skill. This attitude is less strong among the young, Oriental zoot-suiters with their hair done in pompadour fashion, and among army veterans with an addiction to the tango (Israel has some fetching native tangos) who have been conditioned by the Israeli USO to the idea of being entertained. The Oriental adolescents, lacking the price of admission, ride side-saddle on the fences of garden cafés (the climate necessitates outdoor entertainment) and unnerve hapless entertainers by paying their tribute in the dubious coin of Bronx cheers.

Israeli night clubs feature Hebrew crooning, Eastern and Central European *Heimweh* songs, and the usual wisecracking master of ceremonies. A reasonably uninhibited sex life, free of morbid repression and sordid clandestine promiscuity, has made the Israeli unresponsive to salacious innuendo. The program, at times, is potluck, featuring "internationally famous" obscure hams. My wife and I spent a painful half hour in Tel Aviv one night watching the "latest sensation from America," a fugitive from amateur night at the Academy on 14th Street, exhaust his pathetic routine of the usual claptrap—tap dance, juggling, and crooning in a voice that sounded like a screw driver boring into tin.

ONE can report that Habibi's entertainment follows this authentic Israeli pattern in most ways. The master of ceremonies mugs, wisecracks, hugs the microphone, and pounds the piano, though he is never really offensive. The American audience's collective face expresses the tentative confusion of persons who find themselves fumbling with their keys at someone else's keyhole. The Jerome Weidman garment manufacturer, accustomed to having a throaty female pat his bald pate as she wiggles suggestively past the ringside tables, fidgets and is inexplicably unhappy, and hopes that this is only the come-on and that the "real stuff" is yet to come. It never does. Israeli love songs are naive and young; not even Mae West could nasalize suggestiveness into the simple tunes and ingenuous words. As in all Israeli entertainment, emphasis in the Habibi show is not on female pulchritude but on youth, on Galilee and young love, and the program includes English and French ballads and a Yiddish lullaby. Some in the audience mellow as the evening wears on, others pay their checks and stride out in disgust, and will probably never take that vacation trip to Israel. Those who stay on in the jammed room are the younger couples, who glow incandescent through an evening of ***kneid-***

lach, horas, and the sound of the Israeli tongue.

The real Israeli stars at Habibi are Hillel and Aviva, husband and wife. A tall, gaunt, sharp-featured war veteran who walks with a limp, his white shirt open at the collar, Hillel constantly switches from his shepherd's reed flute with its haunting sounds to a pleasant baritone. Dark, Semitic-featured Aviva, reaching to his shoulders, addresses the audience shyly yet firmly. She accompanies her husband with cymbals when he sings, and in voice when he plays his flute, but hers is always the accompaniment, and she glances at him in a studied, deferential, Oriental fashion that is not at all the way between man and his maid in Israel. Most of their melodies are in the tradition of the so-called Mediterranean school of Israeli composers, headed ideologically by the novelist Max Brod, who seek to retrieve a regional music by mining in the caverns of Hebrew liturgy, Arab melodies, and Oriental Jewish folk music. Hillel and Aviva encourage audience participation by calling on the audience to sing the refrains, clap their hands at appropriate intervals, and join in dancing the *hora.*

Hillel and Aviva's performance is in the spirit of the annual folk art festivals arranged at some of the *kibbutzim.* The rest is usual night club routine, without the usual vulgarity. Zamira Gonn, who came here with the pre-Israel Peter Bergson émigrés and has stayed on, swings the Hasidic dance like a *kazatske,* in true Rumanian wine-cellar fashion, and performs a Hindu dance as Hindus would not. It may well be that when Aviva with her cymbals and Hillel with his flute return to Israel soon, the Vienna waltz will reclaim Habibi once again, even if *manah rishona* holds its own on the menu.

When we left close to midnight on a Saturday evening, the audience had changed twice, the place was still jammed, and adolescent youngsters waiting to get in formed a human puddle on the sidewalk outside the club. They were not the kind who usually frequent places with a minimum cover charge. It is more natural to them, one surmises, to gobble frankfurters and popcorn and climb to the balconies of the neighborhood movie. It may be that they have been attracted to Habibi by the same vague curiosity and longing that caused their seniors by several years to join up with the Israeli air force not long ago. An awning in blue and white with tall Hebrew-looking letters may mean more to them than you and I can fathom, Habibi. It may be their streamlined version of the Wailing Wall.

THE STUDY OF MAN

DOES PSYCHOANALYSIS CURE?

The Difficulties in the Way of an Answer

LILLIAN BLUMBERG

IN 1892 a woman, since known as Elisabeth v. R., was treated for hysterical lameness by a young Viennese physician. Maladies of this type, which were more common in the past century than now, had usually failed to respond to medical treatment. Elisabeth v. R.'s case, however, was memorable because her doctor, Sigmund Freud, cured her by causing her to remember certain long forgotten childhood experiences. The method by which he effected this he called psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis was first applied exclusively to afflictions similar to Elisabeth v. R.'s, and because it literally succeeded in causing the lame to walk and the blind to see, it attracted worldwide attention.

However, when Freud applied psychoanalysis to other types of neurotic illness he discovered that the technique he had used with such success in the case of conversion hysteria—as the type of hysteria leading to localized physical symptoms is called—did not necessarily relieve other neurotic symptoms. Not that Freud felt that the disappearance of symptoms was of itself a sure sign of cure; neurotic symptoms can be hidden, he recognized, or new symptoms substituted for old, while the illness itself remains unchecked. How much less, then, could the conscientious physician say he had obtained a cure if even the original symptoms failed to clear up, as was often the case.

Faced often by unsatisfactory therapeutic results, Freud changed his technique for handling patients. He shifted from the analysis of *symptoms* to the analysis of total *character*. He expected that psychoanalytic theory would eventually be developed to the point where psychoanalytic treatment could be successfully applied to *all* mental illnesses. It seems clear that he regarded success in clinical application as the most important means of establishing the truth of his theory, and as necessary before psychoanalysis could speak with the authority of a full-fledged science.

The common belief that Freud did not value psychoanalysis primarily as a technique of cure is correct only for the last decades of his life, when he became occupied with the more speculative aspects of his theory. In the early days of psychoanalysis he considered the alleviation of human anguish to be of paramount importance. In 1910 he wrote: "Psychoanalytic therapy was created through and for the treatment of patients permanently unfitted for life, and its great triumph has been that by its measures a satisfactorily large number of them have been rendered permanently fit for existence." But then the disappointing results of his treatment and later turns of theory led him to despair of the possibility of radically changing what he came to believe was man's essential irrationality.

Yet if psychoanalytic ideas today permeate every area of culture, they owe much of their credit to Freud's first dramatic cures, not to his theories as such. Psychoanalysis holds public attention not primarily as an explanation of hu-

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IN THE past few years, psychoanalysts have been debating among themselves the problem of cure—what it means, how often and to what degree it is achieved, how one may know it has been achieved. LILLIAN BLUMBERG here reviews some of this recent discussion, as it is reflected in the professional literature. Miss Blumberg, now studying for her doctorate in philosophy at New York University, has worked as clinical psychologist, industrial psychologist, and employment counselor. She was born in New York City and attended Brooklyn College and the University of Iowa.

man behavior, or as an aid in the interpretation of literature, but because it offers itself, above all, as a technique for the relief of human suffering. The question of cure therefore becomes central. But how is one to make any judgment here, without knowing what determines when a patient is cured? And this basic, prior question still remains unanswered.

TODAY many patients who come under psychoanalytic treatment do not show such obviously pathological symptoms as hysterical paralysis. They suffer variously from vague fears and anxieties, feelings of failure and of being unloved, sexual impotence, addictions, periods of depression, restlessness, despair, general malaise, and emotional apathy. After several years of psychoanalysis they may have remembered many childhood experiences, understood the effect of parents, siblings, friends, upon their development, be able to decipher the unconscious meaning of their dreams, and better understand the behavior of associates. But despite the fact that they may have achieved reasonably complete intellectual insight into the nature of their illnesses, patients often retain the symptoms that led them to the analyst's couch. Thus, despite the prestige psychoanalysis enjoys as a psychiatric treatment, any guarantee of its clinical success is still problematic.

Psychoanalysts themselves are worried about this, more worried perhaps than their patients. In January 1948, the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Insititute held the first meeting in this country to consider means of investigating the efficacy of psychoanalysis. The report of these discussions is contained in the orthodox Freudian 1949 *Yearbook of Psychoanalysis* (New York, International Universities Press, 317 pp., $7.50). In 1941, Dr. Clarence Oberndorf (who had proposed the topic of the Boston conference) sent a questionnaire to twenty-four leading American analysts, all of whom had had more than twenty years of experience. The eighteen replies he received, he writes in the *Yearbook,* were ". . . very disconcerting. There was nothing upon which they agreed, not in the type of case best suited for analysis, nor the method of termination, nor results, nor how many patients were helped through analysis to avoid serious mental illness. This . . . added to the already great confusion concerning technique and type of case to which psychoanalysis should be applied."

It is generally agreed that certain mental disorders such as schizophrenia, manic depressive psychosis, psychopathy, and others, do not respond favorably to the psychoanalytic method; for both theoretical and practical reasons psychoanalysts disagree among themselves as to whether or not such cases should be accepted for treatment. When, either for experimental purposes or inadvertently—because of mistakes in the original diagnosis—such cases are treated by psychoanalysis, it is more or less expected that the results will be unfavorable. Obviously, to evaluate psychoanalysis on the basis of its success with a category of cases that psychoanalysis itself is not sure it can treat would be unfair and fruitless. Judgments of psychoanalysis should be based on the types of cases traditionally considered best suited to its treatment. However, failures with even such types of cases at the hands of classical psychoanalysis occur frequently enough to be a source of dismay to psychoanalysts—as Dr. Oberndorf, who writes with honesty and clarity, himself admits:

"The failure of such cases to respond offers the greatest challenge to the method. Many of these are cases where the neurosis may be fairly well limited, such as compulsive handwashing or fear of death, and yet after from three to five years of analysis, the patient is still thoroughly incapacitated. The psychoanalytic treatment over this period may have been given by the same or several successive analysts.

"I have reported one such case where a mixed neurosis had existed in a forty-year-old man from the age of six years. The mechanisms were so characteristic of compulsion neurosis that they had been used as typically illustrative before a class of students at a psychoanalytic institute. He had been treated psychoanalytically by four competent analysts before he came to me, his fifth analyst, and discontinued at the end of about a year and a half without improvement, for I had failed as had my predecessors.

"Unsatisfactory results with this category of cases is a principal source of discomfiture and chagrin to the analyst and may arouse doubts as to the adequacy of the psychoanalytic method."

A difficulty that arises in attempting an estimate of the success of psychoanalysis lies in the fact that a statistical survey indicating the approximate percentages of successful and unsuccessful analyses has never been made in this country. One of the reasons for this—aside from the technical complexities such a project would involve—is that psychoanalysts are not, as pointed out earlier, agreed as to what they mean by "cure." According to Dr. Oberndorf: "It is difficult to establish criteria of what constitutes a satisfactory result with psychoanalysis. . . . No investigation exists which proves that long deep analysis conducted according to the orthodox technique produces more lasting results in any form of neurosis."

The term "cure" itself, indicating a transfer from one sharply defined state to another, is somewhat inappropriate when used in psychoanalysis. For one of Freud's major contributions to psychiatry was the conception that "normal" and "abnormal" are but quantitative extremes of human behavior, rather than separate and antithetical categories; there are no distinct boundaries between what is normal and what is abnormal, but only shadings. Since Freud's time it has become a psychiatric custom to use, instead of the term "cure," which implies a qualitative change from abnormal to normal, the more accurate expression "improvement," which only implies a quantitative change from being sick to being less sick. (Today the term "cure" is loosely used as a synonym for "improvement" in the technical journals, although still often used in its older sense in popular psychiatric literature.) "Cure" is most legitimately used in its older meaning in reference to specific symptoms, e.g., the patient was cured of his nail-biting.

But even the term "improvement," while more precise than "cure," remains ambiguous; there are conflicting opinions in psychiatry, generally, as well as in the more specialized practice of psychoanalysis, as to what should be considered adequate criteria of successful "improvement." Dr. Oberndorf asks whether an estimate of results should be based on the patient's own subjective evaluation, or on the doctor's presumably more objective judgment; whether or not relief of symptoms should be accepted as a criterion of improvement, and if so, what degree of alleviation of symptoms should be accepted as evidence of improvement. He cites as an example of the latter difficulty the fact that some analysts may consider that they have achieved clinical success if a homosexual patient becomes adjusted to the fact of his homosexuality and accepts it, while other analysts may believe that cure is not achieved until homosexual patients become heterosexual (unfortunately this is rarely accomplished). In the case of Elisabeth v. R., Freud felt that the fact that his patient eventually got married was an even broader indication of cure than the fact that he had cleared up her lameness. Dr. Lawrence Kubie, in another contribution to the Boston symposium, points out that an evaluation of the degree of success attained "must be made against an estimate of what would have happened to the patient if the illness had been allowed to run its course." But it seems obvious that such an estimate would be difficult to make, and at best only a guess. For instance, if the patient shows no improvement at all, would he have got worse without treatment, remained the same, or improved? If he improves with treatment, might he not also have improved without it? ("Spontaneous improvement" is far from being unknown in psychiatry.) If he gets worse, would he have deteriorated more rapidly without treatment, remained the same, or improved? And how much time should elapse before estimates are made?

Such questions are not easy to answer because so many factors enter into both the clinical situation and the patient's life situation that it is often difficult to know to which specific factor or set of factors clinical changes can be attributed. It would appear that psychoanalysis (and I mean all schools of it) is beset by the same difficulties in achieving clinical success as is the entire field of psychiatry. But if its end results are no better than those attained by the shorter and less expensive methods of standard psychiatry, a serious doubt arises as to whether the financial burden psychoanalysis imposes on the patient is worth it. As a young doctor, Freud believed that the patient should get something for his money; in his *Autobiography* he wrote, "Anyone who wanted to make a living from the treatment of nervous patients clearly must do something to help them."

To speak of "cure" or "improvement" should also imply, it would seem, a fairly clear notion of what is meant by a "normal" personality; but psychoanalysts are as yet far from agreement on what constitutes the "normal personality." Orthodox Freudians disagree among themselves, and all schools and factions appear to disagree with each other.

Franz Alexander states that psychoanalysis has already demonstrated that it can "modify personality structure," while Herman Nunberg says that analysis can only bring about relative changes that involve quantitative differences; Theodor Reik insists that human nature is unchangeable and civilization doomed because of man's instinctive, irrational drive toward destruction. (Many psychoanalysts who subscribe to this view nevertheless continue to practice.) The Fromm-Horney school holds that man is inherently good and that cultural rather than biological factors are responsible for neurosis. Marynia Farnham conceives of the normal female personality as being fundamentally passive —a view dismissed by Clara Thompson.

The influence of anthropologists who insist that normality is not a biological concept at all, but only relative to particular cultural patterns, has only added to the confusion. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time,* Karen Horney wavers between an ideal definition of normal personality and a statistical one based on numerical majorities in specific cultures. (A difficulty of the latter approach is that if everybody in a particular culture has periodic attacks of homicidal mania, then such states would have to be considered normal.) Erich Fromm says that to be normal is to be "productively oriented," but neglects to say what he means by "productively oriented." Wilhelm Reich (who no longer considers himself a psychoanalyst) regards the normal personality as one that has attained full "orgastic potency." (Whether sound or not, this concept of normality is far more elaborate than its appellation would indicate and, unlike most of the others, has specific defining characteristics.)

Perhaps the most astonishing treatment of the problem of normality is that of Dr. Norman Reider, who in a recent issue of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (1950, No. 1) writes that too much psychiatric knowledge can have adverse effects on individuals, for they then develop conflicts around the psychological implications of their self-knowledge and become worried about whether or not they are "normal." To Dr. Reider, the concept of normality is "an extension and derivative of the term good," and becomes a kind of mass illusion. The persistence of symptoms after treatment may then be interpreted as being a necessary and normal state of affairs, for "psychoanalytic literature contains numerous direct and oblique references to the limitations of therapy." "Normality" thus becomes a myth necessary to ward off anxiety, and further, the popularization of psychiatric ideas, in leading people to expect too much, may result in harmful social consequences.

The one point on which all schools of psychoanalysis seem to agree is that it is easier to ascertain what isn't normal than what is.

This vagueness as to the psychoanalytic goal is perhaps the source of the uncertainty of psychoanalysts about when to terminate their treatments. Dr. Alexander says: "The patient does not get up one day from the couch cured. Therefore it is difficult to form an opinion as to when this process should be terminated. . . ." A not uncommon manifestation of the close of a long analysis is "termination jitters" characterized by a sudden relapse on the part of the patient, who had seemed until then to be greatly improved. Wilhelm Stekel was convinced that a long Freudian analysis might even precipitate a latent psychosis, and felt that there was a disproportion between effort and result in the classical technique (*Autobiography,* Liveright, 1950). Reich says, similarly: "To put one's trust in the duration of the treatment makes sense only if and when the analysis is developing. But it is useless to expect success from just waiting." (*Character Analysis,* Orgone Institute Press, 1949.)

The prevailing pessimism in psychoanalytic circles as to the limitations of psychoanalytic treatment is accompanied by an increasing tendency among psychoanalysts to attribute their failures to constitutional or hereditary factors in the patients.

At the Boston conference, Dr. Phyllis Greenacre expressed the opinion that genetic neurotic elements are *necessarily* present in every individual. An analyst who disregards these elements is little better than a layman who naively believes "that neurosis can be completely cured." The failure of some analysts to recognize that the possibilities of treatment are limited by genetic factors comes, Dr. Greenacre feels, from "a narcissistic need to seek or to have omnipotence." Elsewhere in the *Yearbook,* Dr. H. G. van der Waals says, "The potentialities of psychoanalysis are linked with the occurrence of [environmental] modifications and the possibility of a patient being influenced by psychoanalysis finds a limit where the apparent modification actually is a mutation, i.e., a pathological endowment." This throws the onus of failure squarely on the shoulders of the patient, who, if he fails to respond to treatment, is pathologically endowed; it ignores the lessons learned from medical history (after all, conversion hysteria was once attributed to constitutional factors until Freud demonstrated otherwise), and also serves to draw attention away from the fact that the inadequacies of psychoanalytic method itself have not yet been sufficiently investigated.

Why has psychoanalysis failed to fulfill Freud's early expectation that it would become the most successful of all psychiatric techniques? The answer lies partly in the fact that the development of psychoanalysis, instead of following the path of medical science, duplicates that of general psychology insofar as it showed from the first a tendency to split into "schools," each of which developed new terminologies and new concepts. Unfortunately, most of the splits were based on *theoretical* reformulations rather than on practical refinements or improvements of clinical procedures. The relation among the various sects is largely one of mutual suspicion and hostility rather than cooperation, and the fresh insights of one school are only slowly absorbed by the other, generally older, schools, while the late-comers often ignore the gains already made by their predecessors. The privately practicing, eclectic psychiatrist who remains unaffiliated with any particular school has the advantage of being able to draw on the insights of all factions, but he is also likely to suffer from a lack of prestige, since membership in one or another of the various psychoanalytic associations brings one publicity and respectability.

Another reason for the slow development of new clinical techniques derives from a tradition that stems from Freud himself. After he expounded the death-instinct hypothesis, which is based on the supposition that the human organism has a biological drive toward extinction, he became less and less interested in psychoanalysis as therapy and began to regard himself as essentially a research scientist. Since Freud, the dispute between those who hold that the goal of science should be knowledge for its own sake and those who believe that the ends of science should be to serve man's needs has raged nowhere more fiercely than in psychoanalysis. One may feel that Freud, and other psychoanalysts, were completely mistaken in considering that their work on psychoanalytic theory made them "scientists"; nevertheless, that is the way they considered (and consider) themselves. And so a major dispute arose over the question of whether the psychoanalyst is primarily a doctor whose first interest is to cure his patient, or whether he is primarily a research worker seeking to implement and expand psychoanalysis as an explanation of human behavior.

Dr. Oberndorf would seem to represent the viewpoint of those psychoanalysts who believe that the responsibility of the psychiatrist as a healer takes precedence over everything else. He writes: "I think I am correct in saying that Freud felt that if suicide were the logical outcome of the patient's situation, then it is not the physician's concern as to whether or not he carries it out. As doctors who are trained with the idea of curing people, I think we cannot morally or ethically ignore the idea that life is what they are seeking." A similar point of view is expressed by Wilhelm Stekel, who writes: ". . . while Freud asks himself what a case offers to science I ask myself what science can offer to a case." (Freud, like the Bible, can be quoted on all sides of a psychoanalytic issue—in 1909 he would have agreed with Stekel, for he wrote: ". . . a psychoanalysis is not an impartial scientific investigation but a therapeutic measure. Its essence is not to prove anything but merely to alter something.")

Many psychoanalysts, however, do consider the psychoanalyst as first of all, and above all, a research scientist. In another contribution to the symposium, Dr. Phyllis Greenacre says: "It seems to be so simply true as to be elusive that the worker whose goal is the essential verity of his scientific work may in some instances take unnecessary detours of exploration, but by and large will contribute most to the science and to his patients."

Of course, whether the individual psychoanalyst thinks of himself first as a doctor treating sick people, or as an investigator in the field of human behavior, will depend to a considerable extent on his own personality. Yet, if he does function in the dual capacity of physician and research worker, one wonders whether the course of an individual analysis must not necessarily be affected by this. Many clinical hours could be diverted by a physician pursuing his special research, even though he is also dedicated to effecting a cure. In other areas of medicine a new technique is seldom put into practice without some preliminary laboratory research to determine its effectiveness, and usually the patient is informed beforehand of its experimental nature. Needless to say, the development of psychoanalytic theory is a legitimate and necessary pursuit, yet one must ask whether the immediate patient ought to be required to pay for it. Dr. Kubie believes that research and therapeutic functions ought to be separated. He feels that there is a need for a research institute devoted to the study of both the neurotic process and the psychotherapeutic process. Researchers "must be free from any immediate therapeutic or teaching responsibilities. They must be 'unfettered' scientists pursuing unchartered courses to reach unexpected findings."

We must also consider the nature of this scientific work which sometimes tempts psychoanalysts to slight immediate therapeutic tasks. Much of the "theoretical" writing in the journals today has become a highly abstract metaphysics from which the essence of human emotions has evaporated.* Reading it one is often left with the impression that the theoretical preoccupation of psychoanalysts is so strong as to make them oblivious to the immediate human reality of their patients, as well as to the problems of improving clinical procedures.

Dr. Greenacre believes that it would be incorrect to evaluate psychoanalysis on the basis of its clinical success or failure because an emphasis on results would tend not only to deflect interest from psychoanalysis as a science of human behavior, but, paradoxically, might even serve to *increase* rather than reduce the number of failures. She stresses the dangers inherent in "too great therapeutic zeal" on the part of the analyst and emphasizes that Freud "repeatedly indicated his belief that marked therapeutic zeal . . . was frequently an indication of an underlying sadism." According to Dr. Greenacre, the analyst's desire to cure his patient may also come from "personal ambition"—that is, the analyst wants to cure the patient not for the patient's own sake, but because of an unconscious desire for prestige, or because of the feeling of power he gets from the act of curing. In Dr. Greenacre's opinion, such unconscious motivations in the analyst have destructive effects on treatment. However, she does not specify the point at which the desire to heal becomes "excessive." Nor does she—and one cannot but wonder at the omission—consider the possible negative effects of excessive *scientific* zeal.

SPECIFIC criticism of analytic procedures is often received with hostility by the psychoanalysts themselves, especially those anxious to preserve the sanctity of psychoanalytic theory. For instance, Dr. Oberndorf's observation that the analyst's own philosophy and personality can affect the welfare of the patient brought the following comment from Dr. Martin Wangh: "One cannot help but fear that such an argument might lead to psychoanalytic nihilism." To the layman Dr. Oberndorf's further suggestion that group seminars should review cases that have been in analysis for over three hundred hours appears eminently sensible.

Dr. Greenacre touches upon another factor that may be responsible for therapeutic failures —namely, the negative feelings of psychoanalysts towards their patients, i.e., the negative counter-transference—and suggests that analysts should not accept patients towards whom they feel a definite antipathy. (Dr. Greenacre presents no theories about the possible unconscious motivations of analysts who persist in accepting patients they don't like.) Though the phenomenon of counter-transference has been recognized for a long time as a stumbling block to treatment, few investigators have concerned themselves with it. Wilhelm Stekel indirectly recognized that counter-transference was a decisive factor in prognosis. He writes, "I could treat only patients who awakened my interest and with whom I felt sympathetic. . . . I soon dismissed patients who did not appeal to me, or turned them over to my pupils. When the pa-

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*The following excerpt selected at random will suffice to illustrate: "Desexualization, which is the achievement of Thanatos, is a subject hitherto little touched upon by psychoanalysis. Desexualization is commonly considered equivalent to sublimation—incorrectly so, in our opinion, because desexualization is more inclusive, and sublimation a special case of desexualization. The latter we imagine as a continual process, following the libido like its shadow, a process active in all stages of its development. Under the influence of the destructive instinct, the ego tries in its pregenital stages to preserve the oral, anal, and urethral function from sexual amphimixis, and to change them into pure ego functions—ingestion, intestinal and urinary excretions. Even here, as we know, only a partial success is attained, one completely denied the ego in the phallic-genital stage. This is comprehensible when we reflect that the genital does not possess any ego function and only serves the sexual one. Thus desexualization—as is proven by the latent period in which it happens—would equal an extinction of sexuality altogether, would mean throwing out the baby with the bath water."—Ludwig Jekels and Edmund Bergler, "On Transference and Love" (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* 1949, No. 3).

In this connection, I believe that Karen Horney's popular success is due largely to her sympathetic and vivid description of the way neurotic behavior is felt and seen by those in contact with it. Dr. Horney gives us the phenomenon rather than the hypothesis that tries to explain it. As a result, she succeeds in eliciting empathic responses from readers who "find themselves" in her books. In many orthodox Freudian papers, on the other hand, the actual human phenomena that touch off abstruse theorizing are often not considered important enough to mention, and are only rarely described in any detail.

tient bored me it was a torment, and I often had to fight against a strong desire to fall asleep." Because psychoanalysis depends for its effects on complex emotional interactions between therapist and patient, investigations of counter-transference could well turn up clues leading to the improvement of clinical methods. Sometimes the literature indicates that psychoanalysts are thrown off balance by their patients' extraordinary ability to probe their (the analysts') weaknesses; the resulting unfriendly feelings on the part of the analyst are quickly felt by the patient, who then reacts with even stronger negative feelings and resistance to treatment. Some analysts believe they work better with patients whose personality traits strike a responsive chord. Conversely, Stekel has described "analytic scotoma," i.e., the analyst's blindness to neurotic characteristics similar to his own.

PSYCHOANALYTIC treatment shows a vast range of possible approaches: to paraphrase Dr. Carl M. Herold (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1939, No. 8), it may be anything from Theodor Reik's "passive divination" of the patient's repressed thoughts to the "pounding" of his narcissistic defenses (or resistance mechanisms) as practiced by Wilhelm Reich. Dr. Herold believes that any analyst's particular adaptation of technique is a function of his own character structure and is determined by his own specific ways of handling his aggressive feelings within the clinical situation. Thus, it would be *impossible* for Reik, say, to employ Reich's more active method, or for Reich to content himself with Reik's quieter approach. Most analysts, Dr. Herold feels, fluctuate between the clinical extremes he describes. He says, further, "There is a tacit assumption that every analyst should be able to analyze every patient successfully. If he is not successful there must be something wrong with his technique. I admit that in many cases, even the majority of them, this is true; but in this generalization, *the assumption that every analyst should be equally able to handle every case is certainly incorrect. Every experienced analyst recognizes that fact when he has to recommend a patient to a colleague.* If he be conscientious, and there is a choice between several colleagues, he weighs carefully which of them is most fit for that particular patient. *Such judgment is based mostly on intuition rather than on theoretical deliberations.*" (My italics.)

If Dr. Herold is correct, to what extent can one speak of a "classical technique" applied by "orthodox" psychoanalysts? It would appear, rather, that there are as many ways of practicing psychoanalysis as there are psychoanalysts, and the psychoanalytic method itself is a private art rather than a public, scientific discipline. Of course, adherence to an orthodox practice is not in itself necessarily a virtue. Freud once wrote: "There are many ways and means of practicing psychotherapy. All that lead to recovery are good. . . . I consider it quite justifiable to resort to more convenient methods of healing as long as there is any prospect of attaining anything by their means. That, after all, is the only point at issue." Unfortunately, however, it is almost impossible for an individual patient to tell in advance of treatment what particular kind of psychotherapy will help him most. For instance, if the analyst remains passive he may give the patient too little help. At the other extreme, the patient who is unable to withstand the pressure of an unrelenting attack by the analyst on his protective defenses may be tempted to abandon therapy altogether. A central screening of patients would perhaps provide a more objective means of matching patients with psychoanalysts whose individual methods are best suited to their needs than the present haphazard "shopping around." Such a procedure has, in fact, been instituted by Reich's Orgone Institute.

To meet the problem of evaluating therapeutic failures, Dr. Greenacre suggests a uniform filing of case records and an over-all statistical approach. Dr. Kubie continues along these lines by stressing such details as methods of recording data, re-evaluation of psychiatric language, how to write up a diagnosis, etc. "So many elements have to be considered," he says, "that perhaps it will be possible to carry out such a survey only by codifying the essential data, working it out on punch cards and then observing and recording results over a long period of time." A statistical survey is, however, unlikely to succeed unless the problem is first clearly stated. Moreover, this emphasis on mechanical details seems to be part of the American mania for fooling around with the tools of scientific research; and there is the danger often that the mechanics of research will bewitch investigators to the point where the object itself is all but forgotten. In the experimental sense of "science," it is debatable whether psychoanalysis has yet reached the point where statistical evaluations could be useful to it. The chief methodological problem in psychoanalysis is still to determine what the very goal of psychoanalytic treatment is. As

Dr. Kubie says: "It is hard to prove a murder when you cannot produce the corpse."

In many branches of medicine, successful therapists have much of the artist as well as the scientist. Even in the experimental sciences great hypotheses do not evolve from cards punched on IBM machines but from insights relating apparently unconnected variables. In psychiatry such relations are often felt rather than logically understood, as Otto Fenichel realized when he wrote, "The therapeutic successes that are reported [in connection with psychotics] are not yet sufficiently due to a systematic, scientific consciousness of the necessary modification [of the classical procedure] but rather to the intuitive, therapeutic skill of the respective analysts"; and later in the same volume, "The majority of therapists do not follow any conscious 'system' but, rather, their intuition. The doctor guesses, acts parts, changes his behavior according to the patient's manifest reactions, without understanding them. A good 'born psychologist' will succeed, a bad one will fail." (*The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis,* Norton, 1945.) The sensitive therapist reacts instinctively to the succession of signals that go back and forth between himself and the patient. These warn him when he is in error.

The good clinician sees what actually is before him, not what theoretically *should* be there. He perceives how the patient reacts in reality and not the way he is supposed to react according to a set of rules. Freud, to judge by his own writing, was rather impatient with his own rules. A therapeutic system hardened into inflexibility is about as useful in a specific clinical situation as an army field manual would be during the establishment of a beachhead. The "bad psychologist" usually suffers from a lack of empathy for which he compensates by applying therapeutic rules mechanically. Descriptions of the way classical psychoanalysis functions are often given in terms of an ideal situation. Such descriptions ignore the fact that what is supposed to happen in theory far too often fails to happen in practice.

In spite of the fact that the psychoanalysts, in their technical journals, are conservative in their estimates of the success of psychoanalysis, many of them, in their popular texts, continue to oversell the actual achievements of psychoanalysis. Serious writers like Kris, Hartmann, and Loewenstein, who attempt to formulate psychoanalytic concepts with greater clarity and precision, are crowded out of the limelight by the "glamor" analysts, who empty psychoanalytic ideas of their content and misrepresent psychoanalysis itself as a panacea as easy to take as vitamins.

In the process of transplantation from its native Vienna to this country, psychoanalysis has become singularly American in its values and appeal. Concepts such as "adjustment," "productivity," "self-realization," "optimal functioning," all of which belong to the notion of "the normal personality," derive from the high premium Americans put on success, getting ahead, conformity, etc., etc. In America even perfection is relative and Americans are constantly preoccupied with improving themselves. And while not everybody can afford to be psychoanalyzed, almost anybody can read about it. For every person who actually enters psychoanalytic treatment there are probably hundreds who read popular psychoanalytic texts and absorb psychoanalytic ideas in garbled fashion. As a result the "wild psychoanalysis" that Freud warned against in 1910 now prevails everywhere.

Meanwhile psychoanalysis has achieved the status of a secular dogma, and its practitioners have become culture heroes held in awe as magical figures. In movies about psychiatry the psychoanalyst can no more be mistaken about human nature than Einstein can be about an equation; in Hollywood a therapeutic failure is inconceivable. Many psychoanalysts, especially when their works are aimed at mass consumption, seem to take this myth about themselves with utter seriousness. A stock scene in a semi-novelized account of a-day-in-the-life-of-a-psychoanalyst pictures him alone at his desk brooding over the problems of the world while a shaft of sunlight coming through an open window plays over his head. "I was tired," says Dr. Ludwig Eidelberg's fictional analyst; "I looked at the little clock ticking busily on my desk, and saw that soon the long day would be over. Then I could cease being God and Devil, father and mother, and could be myself. Two more hours and I could feel sad or exuberant, angry or friendly, just as I wished." (*Take Off Your Mask,* International Universities Press, 1948.)

The vast and complex structure of psychoanalytic theory has remained inaccessible to verification according to experimental principles; thus far, such attempts as have been made to bridge the gap between psychoanalysis and experimental psychology have been, in the main, unsuccessful. Yet, psychoanalysis has immeasurably enriched man's knowledge of himself and its insights should not be lost in the limbo to which go the fads in which the public has lost interest. There is a real danger that this will happen, because psychoanalysts have been dealing with patients from behind a metaphysical veil too long; human beings are the reality, and not theories about them. In present-day psychoanalysis, theory seems to have become a higher value than the welfare of the patients with whom those same theories are presumably concerned. If psychoanalysis is to fulfill its early promise as a therapeutic method, a retreat to first principles may be necessary even at the cost of surrendering cherished hypotheses. And the attachment to science on the part of the psychoanalysts should come to mean, not elaborate theorizing barely related to observable human behavior, but a more systematic effort to understand just what is being done with patients, its successes and its failures. And this in turn means concern with such basic scientific procedures and processes as systematic observation, full recording, frank discussions of successes and failures, and, where possible, statistical and experimental research.

Dr. Oberndorf says, "Further investigation of the cause for disappointment with the psychoanalytic technique is indicated, for up to the present time no concerted effort has been made by any group of analysts to pool their experiences to this end." Of course, the task will be difficult. "For," as Freud said, "it is not so easy to play upon the instrument of the soul."

HAPPY ARE THEY

AVRAHAM BEN YITZHAK

HAPPY are they that sow and shall not reap,
For they shall journey far.

Happy are they that are liberal, whose young splendor
Compounds the light of days and their diffusion—
Who disburden themselves of finery
At the hub of roads.

Happy are they that are proud, whose pride has swept their inmost
borders
To become as the humility of white
After the risen rainbow.

Happy are they that know what their heart calls from the desert,
And the silence flowers on their lips.

Happy are they, for they shall be gathered into the heart of the world,
And, wrapped round in oblivion,
The Constant shall be their wordless portion.

AVRAHAM BEN YITZHAK (Abraham Sonne) died in Israel this year at the age of sixty-six. Briefly, after the First World War, he played a role in Jewish education in Vienna, and later, in the Zionist Executive in London. In 1922 he retired to live a completely withdrawn life, first in Vienna and then in Jerusalem. His private reputation was that of an extraordinary personality, the author of a number of fine Hebrew poems which he preferred not to publish. The present poem was translated from the Hebrew by Jacob Sloan and Gabriel Preil.

LETTERS FROM READERS

"Eye-Witness: Peekskill"

To the Editor of Commentary:

The article by James Rorty and Winifred Raushenbush ["The Lessons of the Peekskill Riots," in the October issue] refers (p. 319) to "Howard Fast's 'Eye-Witness: Peekskill,' a Communist treatment."

I was chairman of the Westchester Committee for a Fair Inquiry into the Peekskill Violence [which issued the pamphlet]. You will find the pamphlet "Eye-Witness: Peekskill" to be written by Cecil Lubell of Croton. To the best of my knowledge, none of those who participated in its writing and distribution were Communists. The principal agency of distribution was the Methodist Federation for Social Action. I would be curious to know what led your authors to think that Howard Fast, or the Communists, had anything to do with this enterprise.

In view of the serious implications of charges of Communism in the present climate of opinion, I believe that the members of the Committee for a Fair Inquiry into the Peekskill Violence are entitled to a fair and full retraction in your pages.

Goodwin Watson

Teachers College
Columbia University

In Reply

To the Editor of Commentary:

Our memory was at fault in attributing "Eye-Witness: Peekskill" to Howard Fast and we are glad to make the correction. As a matter of fact the pamphlet was published anonymously, and Dr. Watson would appear to be at fault in attributing its authorship to Cecil Lubell, because Mr. Lubell himself denies this. The pamphlet, Mr. Lubell tells us, was written "collectively" by a group of people whose names he does not wish to divulge, nor does he remember who was chairman of the committee at the time the pamphlet was published in its first edition.

Mr. Lubell's modesty, if it is that, is understandable. "Eye-Witness: Peekskill" is largely a scissors job. Mr. Fast did not write it, but he is one of the two principal "eye-witnesses" who are quoted at length, the other being Leon Strauss, leader of Robeson's "Security Guards." The account by Mr. Fast, as well as a statement by one "Kurt J.," is reprinted from the *Daily Worker,* although the source is not quoted. These statements and that of Paul Robeson, which appears on the back cover of the first edition, hew closely to the Communist party line on the riots and provide the pamphlet's prevailing coloration. (Mr. Robeson's statement and that of "Kurt J." are omitted from the second printing, to make room for quotations from the American Civil Liberties Union report and a statement by a group of Mt. Vernon clergymen.) Without much room for argument, the views of Mr. Fast, Mr. Strauss, and Mr. Robeson represent the Communist view, and these views are not challenged elsewhere in the pamphlet.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action, which according to Dr. Watson distributed the pamphlet, was exposed in 1947 by Frederick Woltman of the New York *World-Telegram* as a "religious Communist front." On April 20, 1950, the Council of Bishops asked the Federation to drop the word "Methodist" from its name. On its failure to comply, the organization was evicted from its headquarters in the Methodist Church Building at 150 Fifth Avenue. It is a little surprising that Dr. Watson should have called attention to the role of the Federation in distributing the pamphlet, since he is a Methodist, active in the field of religious education, and presumably acquainted with the above-mentioned facts.

According to Mr. Lubell and Mrs. Edith Currier, members of its executive board, the Westchester Committee for a Fair Inquiry into the Peekskill Violence grew out of the Westchester Committee on Law and Order, which, together with People's Artists, Inc., sponsored the second Robeson concert. The parent committee was established the day after the first riot, at a meeting addressed by Howard Fast and William L. Patterson. Active in its creation were Dr. Frederick Gottlieb, Dr. Harry Offenhartz, Raymond Currier, and Michele Cinbalo, the last two candidates respectively for Westchester County Executive and District Attorney on the American Labor party ticket.

The names of the officers and executive board of the Committee for a Fair Inquiry, omitted from the first edition of "Eye-Witness: Peekskill," are given in the second edition, which was published in December 1949. A number of the persons listed have been active in the Westchester Branch of the American Labor party. Neither the composition of the Committee for a Fair Inquiry into the Peekskill Violence, nor the civic associations of Dr. Watson himself, offer any basis for confidence that the committee gave weight to any but the Communist side of the question. In any case, having again examined the contents of the pamphlet in both its first and second editions, the writers see no reason to modify their judgment that "Eye-Witness: Peekskill" presents a Communist view of the riots. In effect, if not in intent, it is a piece of Communist propaganda.

JAMES RORTY
WINIFRED RAUSHENBUSH
Flatbrookville, New Jersey

Communism in Asia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The generalizations in Karl A. Wittfogel's "How to Checkmate Stalin in Asia" (in the October COMMENTARY) are somewhat less than convincing to the present writer, who lived in China for ten years and in 1949 spent seven months under the Chinese Communists.

The Chinese Communists, Dr. Wittfogel tells us, are "driven by the same expansive urges" as those of Soviet Russia. As proof he adduces their arming of "the Communist forces in Indo-China," preparations to "annex Tibet," and "massing of large military forces on the border of North Korea." This argument overlooks several pertinent considerations: (1) That in the eyes of many non-Communist Asians—Indians and others, as well as Indo-Chinese—the insurgents in Indo-China (not all of them, by any means, Communist) are at least as "legitimate" as the French colonial forces they are fighting. (2) That Tibet, a country long attached to China in the days of Chinese empire, has sent a delegation to conduct peaceful negotiations with the Chinese Communists. (3) That for the Chinese Communists to hold their troops within their own borders is a rather negative way of expressing their "expansionist urges," which would have been demonstrated far more convincingly if the Chinese had helped the North Koreans to drive the Americans into the sea, as they could have done rather easily any time before September 15.

More important, however, is a consideration which probably rarely occurs to most Americans. We, the most powerful country in the world, and one admittedly hostile to the new government in China, are pouring arms into Indo-China, warships into the Formosan straits, and troops into Korea—all places considerably closer to China than to the United States. Should we be surprised, then, given the existing relations between the two countries, that many Chinese regard these moves as expressing "expansionist urges" on *our* part? Unfortunately for the effects of our altruistic protestations, these Chinese judge them in the light of what has recently happened to our "hands-off" policy on Formosa, enunciated by us less than a year ago. . . .

Above all, however, what Dr. Wittfogel should have stressed is that the present Chinese view of America is much more than merely the result of Communist ideology and propaganda. Initially it sprang from the disastrous American policy of continuing to support a Chinese government long after it had lost the confidence of its own people. I can testify that this policy caused widespread resentment among non-Communist Chinese intellectuals long before the Communist assumption of power, and that it has since enormously aided the Communists in their task of reorienting China toward Russia.

In view of the prevailing mood in America today, and especially in Congress, I find it difficult to share Dr. Wittfogel's optimism about the possibility of checking Communism in Asia. Certainly we are not going to check Communism by supporting men like Bao Dai and Chiang Kai-shek and shouting "Communist" at all who oppose them. Nor by a Point Four program which after nearly two years of painful gestation has brought forth only the most inadequate handful of dollars. . . . In fact, I doubt if we can check it even through land reform as "comprehensive" as that initiated in South Korea in June 1949—which, as Dr. Wittfogel himself points out, was still a dead letter a whole year later. To cope with the present revolution in Asia we need far more clarity of thinking, imaginative insight, speed, and decisiveness, than any displayed by us to date.

DERK BODDE
University of Pennsylvania

A Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My article "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule" in the October COMMENTARY contains an error which somehow crept in during the course of revision. On page 352 there is the statement that "the Bavarian government only recently opened one more (the fourth) university in Bavaria." The fact is that the project was abandoned, after long and heated discussion.

HANNAH ARENDT
New York City

BOOKS IN REVIEW

American Humanist

Classics and Commercials. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus. 544 pp. $5.00.

The Little Blue Light. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus. 163 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by Irving Kristol

"He has a genuine classical taste, he is not often influenced by fads, and he reads, and writes about what he reads, because he honestly enjoys doing so. Literature is for him not a pretext for an impressive article but a strong taste which he cannot help indulging and which he likes to talk about." These are words that Edmund Wilson applies to Cyril Connolly in one of the essays in *Classics and Commercials*. I do not know just how accurately this description fits Connolly, but it does state very well the qualities of learning, unpretentiousness, and love of letters that have made Edmund Wilson America's foremost literary critic.

There are, it would seem, two main kinds of criticism. The first is an ally (occasionally a betrayer) rather than a child of literature, and ranges from the imaginative to the academic. On the one hand, it leads to rhetorical, historical, and philological scholarship, which can only be appreciated after a careful reading of the text itself, and from which we learn things about the text that we were incapable of seeing for ourselves. On the other hand, it leads to a commentary that can stand, and is usually read, independently of the text, for its moving power consists in certain ideas or general insights to which the critic has been prompted or which he has taken this opportunity to reveal. A second kind of criticism meets journalism part way, is a genuine introduction to the writer in question, and often spends itself in getting the reader of criticism to read the book criticized and in advising him what it is he should be careful to keep in mind. It is this sort of thing that makes up the bulk of *Classics and Commercials,* a collection of Wilson's essays from the *New Yorker* and other periodicals. (The book also contains a series of sketches of California writers which were previously published as *The Boys in the Back Room.*)

With the accentuated cleavage between "highbrow culture" (that is, what used to be called culture, plain and simple) and "popular culture" (the modern equivalent of the Roman circus), the second kind of criticism has fallen out of respect and into disrepair. So it is possible for Stanley Edgar Hyman to refer to Wilson as a "writer of epistles to the philistines"—a philistine remark if ever there was one. What it is now the fashion to regard as literary criticism serves more often than not as a vehicle for philosophical, theological, and moral discourse, or for scholarly exhibition. There is nothing improper in this; philosophers must have occasion to speak and scholars to publish, and some truly impressive writing has been born of it. But the price has been costly: it has meant that the literate but non-literary public (including not a few professors) has been banished from the paradise of letters. For almost three decades Wilson has been one of the valiant few in this country who have been fighting the widening division between sacred criticism and the profane reader. It has been a losing fight, if a very good one. Wilson's essays served to acquaint a generation of readers with such writers as Joyce, Proust, Valéry, as well as Dickens and Kipling. One wonders how, in the days to come, without the assistance of this kind of literary journalism, readers and writers will get to know one another.

The qualities that made Wilson's previous books so successful are abundantly in evidence in *Classics and Commercials.* He is an enthusiastic bookworm and—what is becoming more rare—a profoundly educated man, knowing classical and modern languages and their literatures. His prose is fine, lucid, cultivated yet colloquial (sometimes, perhaps, too colloquial, as in his use of "awful" and "terrific"). He is expert at plot-synopsis at the same time that he can reach down to the root metaphor of a writer, as in his essay on Steinbeck in which he demonstrates Steinbeck's obsession with humanity as pure biological process. He has an astounding ability to discuss the totality of an author's work, picking parallels from various novels, contrasting plot situations, etc., and since he says somewhere that he hardly ever re-reads a book, he must have the benefit of an extraordinary memory. Added to this is an authentic humility in the face of the literary experience: "But there really is no way of considering a book independently of one's special sensations in reading it on a particular occasion"—what a relief from those immortal verdicts to which contemporary critics, following T. S. Eliot, are moved!

Wilson's opinions on the relation of literature and criticism to life have remained stable throughout his career, in spite of significant shifts in emphasis. One of the essays in *Classics and Commercials* is entitled "Thoughts on Being Bibliographed." In it Wilson makes a distinction between the "writers" of the 'teens and 20's and the "intellectuals" of the 30's and 40's, and sees himself as one of the former, belonging to "a kind of professional group now becoming extinct and a legend, in which the practice of letters was a common craft and the belief in its value a common motivation." He continues: "The journalist of the later era is troubled at the thought of a writer who works up his own notions and signs his own name; and for the literary man in a college. . . the literary man of the 20's presents himself as the inhabitant of another intellectual world. . . . The young men of our earlier classes saw in literature a sphere of activity in which they hoped themselves to play a part. You read Shakespeare, Shelley, George Meredith, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, and you wanted, on however infinitesimal a scale, to learn their trade and have the freedom of their company."

The specific working company that Wilson chose was that of Mencken and Shaw, and, further back, Poe and De Quincey—journalists all, who made their living writing for periodicals. In a larger company he is (somewhat more loosely) associated with Ruskin, Taine, and Sainte-Beuve, of whose criticism he has written that it "was also the vehicle for all sorts of ideas about the purpose and destiny of human life in general." For Wilson is a humanist, and so profoundly one that he is among the very few literary men whose talents were not damaged either by his conversion to Marxism or his disillusionment with it. He has never permitted his theories to dictate his taste. He has always regarded himself as a "historical critic" but he has almost never pretended that history could solve the problem of value; that remained for the critic.

For a humanist, literature is an art, that is, a tool for better living. This is too frequently a catastrophic bias, for it leads the humanist critic beyond literature to some elevated prominence from which the "direction" of literature can be determined and, more often than not, condemned. Wilson has not completely escaped this temptation. Thus in *Axel's Castle* (1931) he announced: "I believe therefore that the time is at hand when these writers [i.e., Joyce, Valéry, Yeats, Proust, etc.] who have largely dominated the literary world of the decade 1920-30, though we shall continue to admire them as masters, will no longer serve us as guides." To this one may reply that these men came to serve us as writers not as prophets—not even as false prophets—and it is the critic who has made them into something they are not in order to render a dogmatic verdict; or that, if masters, it is inconceivable that they should not be also guides. Still, it says much for Wilson's critical gifts, as well as for the nature of his humanism, that *Axel's Castle* is to this day the best introduction to Symbolist literature.

Perhaps the saving feature of Wilson's "historical" approach has been the fact that its categories were not general and philosophical but passionately moral and peculiarly American (though this has its own hazards, as we shall see below). In an essay in *The Triple Thinkers* (1938) on his former Greek teacher at the Hill School, Wilson wrote: "Mr. Rolfe . . . represented both the American individualistic tradition which has cultivated the readiness to think and act for oneself without looking to God or the State . . . and the older humanistic tradition: the belief in the nobility and beauty of what man as man has accomplished, and the reverence for literature as the record of this."

It is this reverence for man and literature that informs the best of Wilson's work. His fierce American individualism helps explain why his most penetrating studies are of writers like Dickens and Kipling who are (according to his interpretation) rebels against, and outcasts from, a class-ridden society. It also helps explain what can only be called his Anglophobia, for he regards as one of the "basic English qualities" the passion for social privilege. And, finally, his American individualism and his humanism together account for the pride he takes in his profession of literary journalism: if America is not like unto the nations but is a "society in course of construction," then the literary journalist has a role as middleman for civilization's past treasures.

THERE are several relatively minor respects in which Wilson's criticism has given cause for dissatisfaction: his erratic taste in poetry, his interest in "content" over "form," an occasional clumsiness in the historical approach. His essay that provoked the greatest heat—"Is Verse a Dying Technique?" in *The Triple Thinkers*—stands up well upon re-reading. It is true that poetry flourishes today despite Wilson's dim view of its prospects, but it is a poetry that has gone underground, losing in scope while gaining in intensity, a poetry that is the function of individual self-consciousness rather than of a society as a whole, that no longer records, celebrates, enchants—and it is this latter kind that Wilson was talking about.

The most serious flaw in Wilson's criticism, however, is one that he shares with most American intellectuals: a laxity of intellect, a certain obtuseness in handling general ideas, a helplessness and suspicion before anything resembling the "metaphysical." (This cast of the American mind has been acutely analyzed by Lionel Trilling in the concluding essay to his *The Liberal Imagination.*) Usually, this results from the fact that American intellectuals are lazy or smug or simply ignorant. Wilson is none of these, so his failing is all the more inexplicable.

This intellectual inadequacy was displayed in his discussion of Marxism in *To the Finland Station*. It is not, by far, one of the worst books on the subject in English, and there are chapters (on Michelet, for example) that are excellent. But Wilson obviously cannot see how anyone could take Hegel seriously, and since Marx took Hegel very seriously indeed, Wilson can only react with petulance and look upon Marx's thought as a specimen for pathology. It is not surprising that, in *Classics and Commercials,* he has high praise for Max Eastman's very superficial books on Marxist theory.

In the same volume, the essay on Kafka is another case in point. Wilson says that Kafka was "psychologically crippled"—which is as banal as it is false. He complains that Kafka can "in the end only let us down"—as if it were Kafka's job to sustain us when we cannot sustain ourselves. Wilson expressly withholds comment as to whether Kafka's works "represent a retrogression or a progress in the development of modern literature"—a superfluous and thereby unconvincing disclaimer of omniscience with regard to the ends of history. He even takes seriously the comments on Kafka of the English critic D. S. Savage, whose outstanding claim to attention is his hatred of writers and writing. What Wilson omits to say is that Kafka was a sensitive and great artist, even if he did not bring a message to 20th-century man. (I happen to think he brought a message to men of all centuries.) One cannot help but feel that Wilson's animosity to Kafka is somewhat extraliterary. And when one sees Wilson in his fiction wrestle with the very theme that Kafka so brilliantly explored, there is reason to believe that his dislike for Kafka is precisely a hatred for the world that Kafka exposed and which Wilson now inhabits.

WILSON at fifty-five is a rather misanthropic humanist, though his years have not been without honor and he is still published, read, and respected. Times have changed since he entered the literary world in the 20's, and not, he thinks, for the better. In a review of Dorothy Parker, he writes of "how much freer people were in their emotions, in their ideas, and in expressing themselves." "The idea of the death of a society had not yet begun working on people to paralyze their response to experience." There has been a noticeable shift in emphasis in Wilson's criticism during the past fifteen years from the social-historical to the psychological. Where, in *Axel's Castle,* art was to overcome the frustrations of capitalist society, in *The Wound and the Bow* art's purpose is to overcome the frustrations of the individual. The historical critic, pledged to the improvement of humanity, has seen history lose its sense and humanity its dignity. No wonder he is bitter.

This bitterness is more apparent in Wilson's fiction than in his criticism. What, to my mind, is his best short story, "Ellen Terhune," is about frustration and madness, the lovelessness of life and the cruel inexorability of history. Sometimes his fiction has an edge that almost cuts the very thread of the narration, so it is quite difficult to know when he is being serious and when he is mocking the whole business.

I must say, frankly, that Wilson's fiction has always baffled me. He has a sense of the burlesque so fine as to be often invisible. The ity as pure biological process. He has an astounding ability to discuss the totality of an author's work, picking parallels from various novels, contrasting plot situations, etc., and since he says somewhere that he hardly ever re-reads a book, he must have the benefit of an extraordinary memory. Added to this is an authentic humility in the face of the literary experience: "But there really is no way of considering a book independently of one's special sensations in reading it on a particular occasion"—what a relief from those immortal verdicts to which contemporary critics, following T. S. Eliot, are moved!

Wilson's opinions on the relation of literature and criticism to life have remained stable throughout his career, in spite of significant shifts in emphasis. One of the essays in *Classics and Commercials* is entitled "Thoughts on Being Bibliographed." In it Wilson makes a distinction between the "writers" of the 'teens and 20's and the "intellectuals" of the 30's and 40's, and sees himself as one of the former, belonging to "a kind of professional group now becoming extinct and a legend, in which the practice of letters was a common craft and the belief in its value a common motivation." He continues: "The journalist of the later era is troubled at the thought of a writer who works up his own notions and signs his own name; and for the literary man in a college. . . the literary man of the 20's presents himself as the inhabitant of another intellectual world. . . . The young men of our earlier classes saw in literature a sphere of activity in which they hoped themselves to play a part. You read Shakespeare, Shelley, George Meredith, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, and you wanted, on however infinitesimal a scale, to learn their trade and have the freedom of their company."

The specific working company that Wilson chose was that of Mencken and Shaw, and, further back, Poe and De Quincey—journalists all, who made their living writing for periodicals. In a larger company he is (somewhat more loosely) associated with Ruskin, Taine, and Sainte-Beuve, of whose criticism he has written that it "was also the vehicle for all sorts of ideas about the purpose and destiny of human life in general." For Wilson is a humanist, and so profoundly one that he is among the very few literary men whose talents were not damaged either by his conversion to Marxism or his disillusionment with it. He has never permitted his theories to dictate his taste. He has always regarded himself as a "historical critic" but he has almost never pretended that history could solve the problem of value; that remained for the critic.

For a humanist, literature is an art, that is, a tool for better living. This is too frequently a catastrophic bias, for it leads the humanist critic beyond literature to some elevated prominence from which the "direction" of literature can be determined and, more often than not, condemned. Wilson has not completely escaped this temptation. Thus in *Axel's Castle* (1931) he announced: "I believe therefore that the time is at hand when these writers [i.e., Joyce, Valéry, Yeats, Proust, etc.] who have largely dominated the literary world of the decade 1920-30, though we shall continue to admire them as masters, will no longer serve us as guides." To this one may reply that these men came to serve us as writers not as prophets—not even as false prophets—and it is the critic who has made them into something they are not in order to render a dogmatic verdict; or that, if masters, it is inconceivable that they should not be also guides. Still, it says much for Wilson's critical gifts, as well as for the nature of his humanism, that *Axel's Castle* is to this day the best introduction to Symbolist literature.

Perhaps the saving feature of Wilson's "historical" approach has been the fact that its categories were not general and philosophical but passionately moral and peculiarly American (though this has its own hazards, as we shall see below). In an essay in *The Triple Thinkers* (1938) on his former Greek teacher at the Hill School, Wilson wrote: "Mr. Rolfe . . . represented both the American individualistic tradition which has cultivated the readiness to think and act for oneself without looking to God or the State . . . and the older humanistic tradition: the belief in the nobility and beauty of what man as man has accomplished, and the reverence for literature as the record of this."

It is this reverence for man and literature that informs the best of Wilson's work. His fierce American individualism helps explain why his most penetrating studies are of writers like Dickens and Kipling who are (according to his interpretation) rebels against, and outcasts from, a class-ridden society. It also helps explain what can only be called his Anglophobia, for he regards as one of the "basic English qualities" the passion for social privilege. And, finally, his American individualism and his humanism together account for the pride he takes in his profession of literary journalism: if America is not like unto the nations but is a "society in course of construction," then the literary journalist has a role as middleman for civilization's past treasures.

THERE are several relatively minor respects in which Wilson's criticism has given cause for dissatisfaction: his erratic taste in poetry, his interest in "content" over "form," an occasional clumsiness in the historical approach. His essay that provoked the greatest heat—"Is Verse a Dying Technique?" in *The Triple Thinkers*—stands up well upon re-reading. It is true that poetry flourishes today despite Wilson's dim view of its prospects, but it is a poetry that has gone underground, losing in scope while gaining in intensity, a poetry that is the function of individual self-consciousness rather than of a society as a whole, that no longer records, celebrates, enchants—and it is this latter kind that Wilson was talking about.

The most serious flaw in Wilson's criticism, however, is one that he shares with most American intellectuals: a laxity of intellect, a certain obtuseness in handling general ideas, a helplessness and suspicion before anything resembling the "metaphysical." (This cast of the American mind has been acutely analyzed by Lionel Trilling in the concluding essay to his *The Liberal Imagination.*) Usually, this results from the fact that American intellectuals are lazy or smug or simply ignorant. Wilson is none of these, so his failing is all the more inexplicable.

This intellectual inadequacy was displayed in his discussion of Marxism in *To the Finland Station*. It is not, by far, one of the worst books on the subject in English, and there are chapters (on Michelet, for example) that are excellent. But Wilson obviously cannot see how anyone could take Hegel seriously, and since Marx took Hegel very seriously indeed, Wilson can only react with petulance and look upon Marx's thought as a specimen for pathology. It is not surprising that, in *Classics and Commercials,* he has high praise for Max Eastman's very superficial books on Marxist theory.

In the same volume, the essay on Kafka is another case in point. Wilson says that Kafka was "psychologically crippled"—which is as banal as it is false. He complains that Kafka can "in the end only let us down"—as if it were Kafka's job to sustain us when we cannot sustain ourselves. Wilson expressly withholds comment as to whether Kafka's works "represent a retrogression or a progress in the development of modern literature"—a superfluous and thereby unconvincing disclaimer of omniscience with regard to the ends of history. He even takes seriously the comments on Kafka of the English critic D. S. Savage, whose outstanding claim to attention is his hatred of writers and writing. What Wilson omits to say is that Kafka was a sensitive and great artist, even if he did not bring a message to 20th-century man. (I happen to think he brought a message to men of all centuries.) One cannot help but feel that Wilson's animosity to Kafka is somewhat extra-literary. And when one sees Wilson in his fiction wrestle with the very theme that Kafka so brilliantly explored, there is reason to believe that his dislike for Kafka is precisely a hatred for the world that Kafka exposed and which Wilson now inhabits.

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I must say, frankly, that Wilson's fiction has always baffled me. He has a sense of the burlesque so fine as to be often invisible. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that Wilson seems to have no sense of humor at all, so that his parody might often pass for high seriousness. Such a story as "The Princess with the Golden Hair" outraged the critics (to say nothing of the censor) by its seeming pomposity and smugness. But if it is taken as satire, it is a skilful *tour de force*. (The question, however, remains: is it *really* satire?) And Wilson's solemn preoccupation with sex, and his detailed descriptions of sexual encounters, become more meaningful when they are taken as detached, near-clinical analyses of that paralysis of experience he feels humanity to have suffered.

The bitterness is particularly marked in his new three-act play, *The Little Blue Light*. The drama takes place in the "not-remote future" at a country house near New York. It concerns a magazine publisher who represents, in a corrupt and decadent way, the once great American ideals of individualism and honest journalism, and tells of his hopeless struggle against the Teniakis gang, a soulless and ideology-less political machine which has infiltrated all other parties (by this time all unprincipled cliques) and which rules ruthlessly for the sake of efficiency and power. The "little blue light" is a symbol of the evil demiurge who holds the modern world in his grip and assumes concrete shape in the form of the secret weapon of the Teniakis gang: a flashlight attuned to the brain's electric waves so that when it is near a person who experiences anger or hate or fear (but not love) it sends forth a little blue light that electrocutes the victim. There is a gardener who is Italian in the first act, Irish in the second, Scottish in the third, and who, in the play's concluding peroration, reveals himself as the Wandering Jew. In this peroration he presents the play's message:

"We, the Children of Israel, gave you the God of the Old Testament, and you judged and punished like him. We gave you the God of the New Testament, and you tried to forgive and love. We gave you the Social Revolution, and you tried to judge the men of the present and to love the men of the future. But . . . I have lived through two thousand years to see all these moralities fail. Even Israel has forgotten its prophets. . . . They will never give me a passport to Palestine. And in your country who will receive me? . . . What you trust in, for all your techniques, for all your mechanisms of industry and politics, is simply the brute vitality that animates the universe."

The final paragraph of the peroration, it is true, relieves the gloom slightly, for in it the Wandering Jew promises that he shall bring God's word to men "though the Heavens be darkened." Yet the overwhelming effect is one of desolation, as in the Kafka who can "in the end only let us down," and as in that other despairing book by a great humanist man of letters, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

It is not easy to know what to make of this. As in most of Wilson's fiction, the publisher-hero is ambiguous, giving voice to the author's opinions in a curiously refracted way, so that the measure of identity is never certain. And if it is the Wandering Jew who is the real hero, is the religious symbolism at all meaningful or is it mere conventional dramatic ornament? This is, after all, the same Wilson who once wrote that he never thought of religion "save as a delusion entertained by other people which one has to allow for." One remembers that in a story, "Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn at Home," the Devil is introduced as Mr. Blackburn, whose appearance and accent also vary with the occasion—he and the narrator even merge identities for one part of the story—and that the Devil laments the "progress" of humanity beyond good and evil and his consequent technological unemployment. Are the Devil and the Wandering Jew only the tools of a literary fantasy at work? Or is Wilson trying to say something more than the humanist vocabulary permits?

Whatever the case, the portrait of America and the modern age that emerges from *The Little Blue Light* is a disheartening one. We have come a long way from the expectant humanism of *Axel's Castle:* it is one thing to shoo decadent aesthetes from the castle of art, and quite another to expel real ghosts. The one consolation—not to be minimized—is that, in the effort, Wilson continues to strew the stone-cold floor with illuminating literary fragments.

Boring from Within—In Reverse

THE CHOICE. By BORIS SHUB. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 205 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

EVIDENCE has been publicly accumulating for some time that a large part of the Russian people were ready and eager to trade Joseph Stalin in for any non-Soviet regime at the beginning of their share of World War II.

This raises the question: Do they still feel that way, and if so, how should we go about making better use of mass Russian distastes for the Kremlin than Hitler did? In a *Life* article last year, Wallace Carroll, one of our top experts on psychological warfare, drew a preliminary blueprint for recruitment of the Russians as our allies if and when the free half of the world finds itself at war against the Politburo. Boris Shub, another American specialist in the logistics of fighting with words, here offers a program for an all-out psychological offensive right now, even at the possible cost of sparking a planetary explosion.

Fresh from a term as political advisor in Berlin to RIAS, the American radio station behind the Iron Curtain, Shub is confident the Soviet tyranny is teetering on a high wire over a chasm of popular discontent. One good hard shove, he suggests, and down it goes. This advice will be a bit too rich for most stomachs, but Shub makes a persuasive case, at any rate, for his argument that the Russians still detest Stalin—and that we must put that welcome fact to work for freedom.

This reader remembers how, in 1945, Russian DP's lay down on West German railway tracks rather than be returned by the Allies to Soviet-controlled territory. Shub, a Russian-speaking sergeant-interrogator in the American army at the time, tells what happened to the Russian returnees—not just the "collaborationists" but the forced laborers and the war prisoners. They went with gratitude for their American liberators, and misgivings, to say the least, about their future. They were quite right. For those who weren't shot out of hand it was as though, Shub writes, "the American officers and GI's captured by the Japanese at Bataan, together with the American women interned, had been arrested after their liberation, put behind American barbed wire, and finally sent off to work as convict labor in Alaskan mines." If Moscow feared the contamination of the victorious Red Army by Western contact, how much more dangerous a "source of infection" would millions of freed civilians and ex-soldiers be after years in Germany and months with the Americans! The NKVD could hardly have settled for less than isolation of all Russians who had enjoyed a respite from its close attentions.

In Berlin later, Shub had occasion to observe how the "infection" of civilization was also warping the loyalty of the favored ones in the Soviet regime abroad—the journalists, the army brass, the bureaucrats—not excluding the NKVD itself.

He gives the fullest account to date of the speech by Melvin Lasky to a German Writers' Congress, where that intrepid *New Leader* correspondent (now editor of *Der Monat*) upset the Soviet agenda and digestion by expressing deep sympathy for Russian intellectuals laboring under the shadow of the commissars. No less a personage at the Congress than Boris Gorbatov, ace *Pravda* writer, practically apologized to the author for being a Communist.

RIAS aimed as much at Red Army officers and men in Germany as at the Germans. Its broadcasts steadily told the Russians that "we understood their cruel dilemma under Stalin's rule." It dared to dramatize Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. It read the text of Lenin's testament recommending Stalin's removal. Unlike too many of our propaganda efforts elsewhere, it spoke plainly, bravely, and with political savvy. Supported by considerable evidence, Shub maintains that RIAS was avidly "monitored" by the Russians because it fed their hunger for freedom.

By Morris Goldstein

JESUS IN THE JEWISH TRADITION

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MACMILLAN

One part of Shub's brief, while not new, is especially impressive for its compact and devastating irrefutability: that the Russians fought incomparably better for the Czar than for Stalin although they were far worse equipped and worse matched in 1914 against the Kaiser than in 1941 against Hitler. In three years of World War I they defeated the armies of Austria-Hungary, forced Ludendorff to retreat, and yielded only the port of Riga; in five months of World War II they gave up Soviet territory containing 40 per cent of the USSR's population, and over two million Russian soldiers surrendered. "With all the handicaps created by the brutal, senseless Nazi racist policy," Shub quotes from high German Army authorities, "we raised more than half a million soldiers among war prisoners and the peoples of the occupied territory. With an intelligent political policy we would have won the war in the East simply because the Russian people themselves would have overthrown the regime." Only when the Russians realized the Nazis were bent on their extermination as Russians did they begin to fight for their lives —and for Stalin.

Shub goes beyond the recent call of an American Senate group for a propaganda drive to "erode" the Politburo's foundations, or William I. Nicholl's strong plea in *This Week* magazine for a Russian "Emancipation Proclamation" by our government. Shub wants the President of the United States to do all this *and* proclaim our full, material support for any and all nuclei in the Red Army, Communist party, Supreme Soviet, and other bodies moving to replace the Politburo with an interim regime pledged to restore representative government. He wants us to confound Soviet lies about our atomic intentions by demonstrating our unshakeable friendship for the Russian people. We should invoke the human rights provisions of the UN Charter against Stalin, indict him and his chief co-partners in crime before an international tribunal, guarantee the immunity of all Soviet officials who rally to us, and in particular appeal to the Red Army in Eastern Germany, which "is already permeated with the spirit of revolt." If all this provokes Stalin to war, "he will find it most difficult to wage. . . . If he hesitates . . . the gathering momentum of revolution will sweep him from power." Whatever the risk, Shub concludes, it is smaller than waiting for the Soviets to discover the hydrogen bomb.

Shub may be right, but it takes more intestinal fortitude than this reviewer possesses to go all the way with what is clearly a very large order. In his enthusiasm, Shub places perhaps excessive reliance on jammed broadcasts by the Voice of America, on leaflets and Mr. David Sarnoff's mass-produced $2 radio receivers dropped over Russia. He discounts the enormous difficulties of organizing a planned insurrection in a land gripped by the most pervasive and efficient system of espionage and terror ever known. He passes too quickly over the equally enormous difficulties of bringing effective, coordinated aid from the outside to the dissident elements. Finally, he is inviting a great deal of trouble on a hunch which can only be tested by awesome risks.

But there are elements in his program—notably its insistence on straight talk to our real friends in Russia and around the world—which might well be injected into the mild curriculum of State Department and Radio Free Europe propaganda. And Mr. Shub himself—under reasonable restraints to his ardor—could be worth a regiment to our psychological warfare corps.

Remembrance of Things Past

The Testament of the Lost Son. By Soma Morgenstern. Translated by Jacob Sloan in collaboration with Maurice Samuel. Jewish Publication Society. 359 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by Judah Goldin

It is not hard to understand why there is a growing preoccupation with the theme of East European Jewry, why these days there is so much eagerness to recover something of the character and meaning of what is called "the East European period in Jewish history." The brutal finish to that large world and period has left in all of us a sense of stunning loss, and a sense of guilt. For a long time this East European world was underestimated; for a long time the modern Jew adopted a presumptuous condescension toward Yiddish Jewry. With some ammunition borrowed from the secular enlighteners—the *maskilim*—and with both eyes on the possible reactions of the West, one took the East European Jew to task for his resistance to modernism—his stubborn attachment to Yiddish, his outlandish dress, his fantastic curriculum of studies, his grotesque patterns of worship and piety, his fanaticism, his medievalism. Even his poverty was held against him, as though he chiefly were to blame for it.

It is worth remembering that even learned Jews shared this estimate, often encouraged it in fact. Hence the sense of guilt today, hence the compulsion to make atonement of some kind.

The atonement is called for, I would agree—and not alone on intellectual grounds. That is, a review of and a new orientation toward the East European episode in Jewish history is necessary not alone in order to correct errors of historians like Graetz, let us say, or of a host of Sunday-school essayists; this has already been done by a variety of scholars from Dubnow on. Rather, since something like a moral offense accompanied the earlier misconception, even after literary amends have been made there is still need for some personal reflection and act, in order to do justice to the achievements of the East European Jewish world.

But having said this, I cannot help feeling that the contemporary Jew's chief difficulty with the world of East European Jewry lies not in antagonism toward it, or in rebellion against it, but in an inability to understand it. It seems utterly irrelevant to his idiom; at best it appears quaint, epigrammatic, otherworldly. If he is to take that world seriously, it needs to be made intelligible before it is held up as a model to him. Its people need to be recognizable as human beings, not merely as prototypes. With regard to this world, the modern Jew wants to be persuaded, one might say, in terms which do not depend entirely on prior loyalties and commitments.

Now Soma Morgenstern's novel, *Sparks in the Abyss,* the third and last volume of which we now have (*The Testament of the Lost Son*), is, beyond anything else, an act of piety on the part of the author. It is a tribute, full of nostalgia, for little Dobropolia. What he says of the way of life represented by Dobropolia is no *tour de force,* for here is the advantage Morgenstern enjoys: unlike a good many writers on so-called Jewish subjects in languages other than Yiddish and Hebrew, he is intimately familiar with the form and content of Jewish life. He is free from the kind of blunder which frequently reveals that the writer has gone rummaging in some anthology or textbook for his data. Morgenstern knows what prayers were said by Jews and at what times; he knows to what rituals they had to accommodate their daily lives. He knows the stories they liked to tell and listen to. He understands, too, some of the differences between the East European Jew and the Western man. His description, for example, of the opening of an Agudah conference, where the *El Male Rachamim* is chanted and the assembly's responsive wail rises at the recitation of the names of the dead, is something the ordinary writer-on-a-Jewish-theme would not know.

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The trouble with the novel, however, is that its characters, and its chief situations, are one-dimensional. Except (in part) for Shabse Punes, the horse trader, I cannot think of one character who is more than a function of the author's purposes. What happens therefore is that we are furnished with a delicate appreciation of the possibilities, intent, poetry of East European Judaism (or Jewishness, if you wish), but almost all the elements of the dramatic vanish because the nature of the *people* in the story is constantly being overshadowed by their virtues. Much too easily has Alfred, the son of the apostate, "rejected" the Western world. When he says (in the first volume), "Rabbi Abba was right, Uncle. . . . What need have we to warm ourselves at alien hearths and to nibble titbits out of alien pots when there are such things [i.e., affirmations of the sanctity of life] in the books of our sages? Rabbi Abba was right"—he sounds like a paragraph out of some Jewish contribution to civilization. Much too transparent is the juxtaposition of the Hasidic Velvel and his irreverent bailiff Yankel; much too contrived the apostasy and bewildered recantation of Alfred's father. Overly simplified are some of the contrasts between East and West. Koppel, the printer, Velvel informs his Viennese guest, did not feel humiliated when he was molested by hoodlums, despite his poverty and degradation. "He let himself be barked at and did not bark back. On the other hand, I saw a man in Vienna in 1918 who was a doctor of philosophy, a professor, nothing less than an Honorary Councillor, yet with my own eyes I saw that man turn all colors and nearly suffer a stroke when two rascals passed by and one of them said: 'Look at the Jew!' " I have no doubt that this is true, but it reads like a formula.

Every role in the novel is predictable, and thus the very humanity of the people who are to exemplify various virtues is diminished. Willy-nilly, a romanticization of the East European Jewish world is produced to which assent is possible only if one is already in the mood for it.

As a novel then, I'm afraid this book is undistinguished despite Morgenstern's own genuine understanding for the substance of Judaism. He has not misrepresented East European Jewry; he has simply not made it real enough. Yet he has done something else, and here the book is not ineffective. In its descriptions and reflections, it suggests again and again a Sabbath quality, a society where saintliness is rare, to be sure, but not for that reason preposterous when it does occur, a world at prayer or within the range of prayer.

"Is this a community of worshipers? Alfred asked himself. Have they assembled for communal worship? Is that what they are doing? Yes and no. Apparently each prays quite privately. Each one has his own rhythm. Each contributed his share. Did he also share in the general chanting? It seemed so. His uncle was leader and precentor. Did the voice of the leader really lead? Did it dominate? No. And yet it prevailed over the others and appeared to lead. What there actually was, was a conflict—a conflict of word and song, a battle which each led alone. Against whom? Against the precentor? At times it seemed as though his uncle was about to be defeated. He was a messenger of God whose words were interrupted. And yet he regained leadership; he regained it over and over and it seemed also as though his messenger were comforted and encouraged and even uplifted by the circumstances that the words were being, as it were, prayed away from his very lips. Was there here a lack of discipline? It was a warlike praying, a praying of all against all. But the heart of the precentor seemed to be in harmony with this thing."

What Morgenstern does express is a mood, sometimes his own, sometimes the one implicit in the conduct and expectation of the East European Jew. This should not be underrated.

Philosopher of Pre-Industrial Science

FRANCIS BACON. By BENJAMIN FARRINGTON. Henry Schuman. 202 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ROGER JOSPÉ

THIS book emphasizes that Francis Bacon was more than "the Father of Inductive Philosophy." He was not a philosopher immersed solely in scholarly concerns, but a man sensitive to the historical moment through which the England of his times, the England of Elizabeth and James, was passing, and he wanted, as a philosopher, to influence the transformation he sensed was imminent. The idea taken as the center of Bacon's vocation and chosen by Mr. Farrington as the theme of his study is: "that knowledge ought to bear fruits in works, that science ought to be applicable to industry, that men ought to organize themselves as a sacred duty to improve and transform the conditions of life." The birth of this idea is shown in its historical context: Bacon's Calvinist upbringing, the dissemination in the 16th century of the techniques of metallurgy, the social changes in England after the dissolution of the monasteries.

Granted that Aristotle receives through Bacon his first blow from English empiricism. But does this conclusion all by itself and of itself justify a book on the "philosopher of industrial science," and does it satisfy our need to have illuminated our own present-day situation as men involved in an industrial society? It would seem that the chief task, at the moment, of any study that concentrates on Bacon's relation to industrialization is not to point out the novelty of his ideas but the value of those ideas for our own situation as compared with his.

How does Bacon's industrial "humanism" stand up to the industrial pessimism of our day? Faith in industrial productivity as the exclusive means of bettering man's lot has become for us today an illusion. And a philosophy of work based on the value of the products of work must be criticized in the light of a philosophy of work based on the value of the work itself for the human beings doing this work.

Today we are no longer content to evaluate the industrial organization of production as we used to, in terms solely of the utility of its products for human comfort. And finally, we can no longer reflect on our situation without considering the political and psychological consequences of industrial power, and we see consequences of the concentration of that power that were not manifest to Bacon. (He hoped innocently that the place where the issues of industrialism would be settled would be the disinterested meetings of a "Royal Society for Promoting Natural Knowledge.")

Had these very relevant questions been asked, the conclusion reached by a contemporaneous study of Bacon would be that he is the philosopher only of *pre*-industrial science. Such a conclusion would have helped clarify our own unique present attitude and responsibilities to the actuality of full-blown industrialism in which we now live. Mr. Farrington believes, perhaps, that he has clarified the present situation by revealing a humanistic ideal of industrial science formulated in the days of Shakespeare. A more valuable achievement would have been to interpret that ideal, and its social environment, in terms of our subsequent experience.

The Passing of the Badchen

ELIAKUM ZUNSER, POET OF HIS PEOPLE. By SOL LIPTZIN. Behrman. 248 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MOSHE DECTER

THE poet Eliakum Zunser lived through some of the most exciting decades of modern Jewish history. Born in Vilna in 1945, died in New York in 1913, he grew up during one of the early phases of the Russian Haskalah (Enlightenment) and he lived long enough to witness and participate in the full flowering of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, the Zionist movement, and socialism. His death, on the eve of the First World War, virtually coincided with the close of this great era in Jewish cultural history. From a biography of Zunser we should expect to derive, primarily, an appreciation of the quality of his times, of the color, drama, and tragedy of Jewish life in the Pale and at the turn of the century in America. It is precisely in this respect that Dr. Liptzin's study is inadequate, even though he seems to be aware that, but for its historical value and interest, Zunser's work woould, on the whole, not merit serious consideration or study today.

Zunser was a *maskil*—an enlightener, a folk-poet, a *badchen*—a jester, and a champion of social justice. As a man of the Jewish Enlightenment, his voice was not the most stimulating or revolutionary. He clearly shared the aspirations of his contemporaries for a modernization of Jewish intellectual, religious, and social life in the ghetto. But, unlike most of them, his demands were moderate, his methods gradualist, and his terms temperate. As a consequence he was not seduced by the roseate dreams of the Haskalah; and he did not need the pogroms and the evil decrees of the 1880's to return to his people. He had never left, and he never became disillusioned.

Zunser belonged to his people. That is why his roles as folk-poet and *badchen* are the most important and colorful aspects of his life. And yet these aspects never quite spring to life at the hands of Dr. Liptzin. Instead, he treats us to rather lengthy summarizations and analyses of Zunser's poetry and music. Now Zunser was utterly simple as a poet and a rather primitive musician. His poetry, for example, is neither as challenging in thought nor as well-written as that of the pioneer of modern Hebrew poetry, Y. L. Gordon—and who today, outside the Hebrew classroom, reads Gordon for inspiration or poetic beauty? What might have been re-created in this book is the atmosphere of intellectual excitement that characterized the Haskalah

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circles in which Zunser moved, and the life of piety, tragedy, and hope in which ghetto Jews sang his melodies for decades.

But perhaps these lively and living experiences are all but impossible to convey in English, especially to an audience so completely removed from them. How can we recapture the spirit of Eliakum the *badchen*? A *badchen* at a Jewish wedding today is about as rare as a Jew who still gets drunk on Simchas Torah. The *badchen* in the old days was no mere jester, although he had to have a quick and ready wit; he was not just the master of ceremonies, although he had to be the master of the intricately detailed customs and practices of the Jewish wedding. The *badchen* had to regale the wedding guests with Torah; the success of his performance was evaluated, in great measure, by his apt and extensive use of Biblical, Talmudic, and rabbinic quotations, artfully, and preferably extemporaneously, linked with the specific occasion and with the names and backgrounds of the many guests. (How many rabbis today possess the first-rate *badchen's* mastery of the traditional lore?) Zunser's supreme qualities as folk-singer and master of his craft are betokened by the fact that he was everywhere known and beloved simply as Eliakum Badchen.

Eliakum's world has vanished, and with it, the *badchen*. Liptzin does succeed, however, in portraying the man personally—a kind, gentle, wise but simple man who was in every respect *a shayner yid*, a good Jew.

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